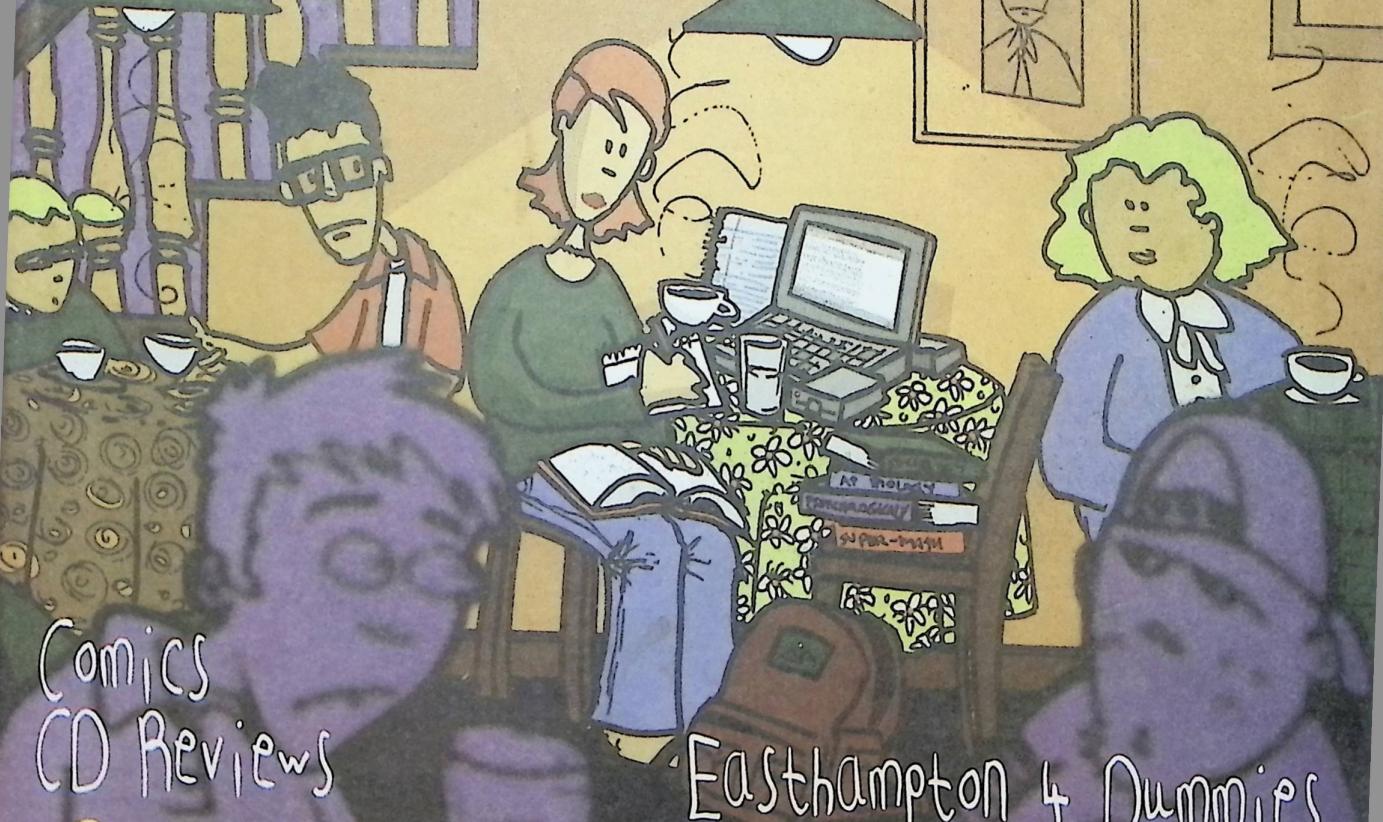


TONY LONG SPEAKS OUT!

SEPT 99
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Comics
CD Reviews

Easthampton 4 Dummies

College Survival Guide

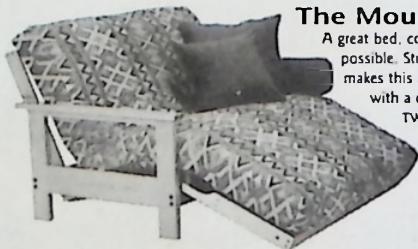


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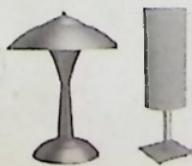
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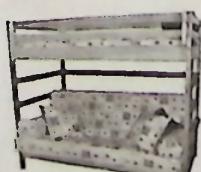
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SEPTEMBER 1999
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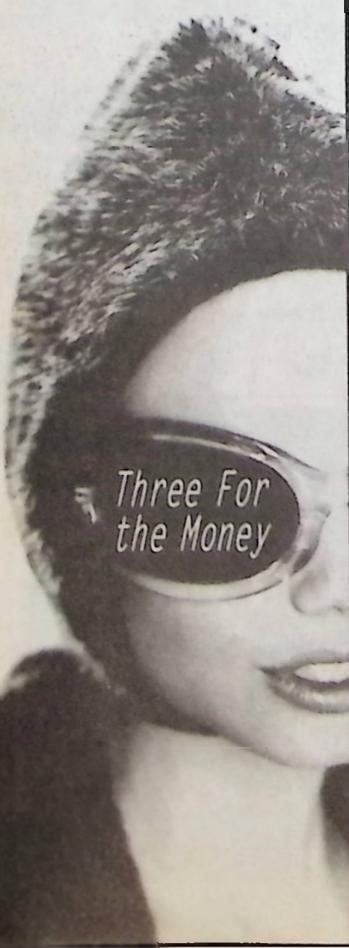
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Join Today

Enter the world of close-out shopping at any of the **OCEAN STATE JOB LOTS** (Holyoke, Chicopee, Springfield). The stores feature name brand stuff for much much less, but beware... what is there today, may not be there tomorrow.

ASTRO VIDEO on Route 5 in Holyoke has a basement warehouse with thousands of previously viewed video tapes at prices starting at \$2.95. It's open only on the weekends; if you're a movie fan be prepared for some serious browsing.

BUCK A BOOK on Memorial Drive in West Springfield has bargain books, videos, CD, greeting cards, computer software, and much more. Like Ocean State Job Lots, the stock changes quickly.

- Mike Dobbs



Here's a few websites with scholarship information/savings for students:

www.annies.com

Annie's Homegrown Pasta gives you a host of information about financial aid, and free macaroni and cheese for good grades.

www.studentadvantage.com
Student Advantage sets up discounts at local eateries and national retailers.

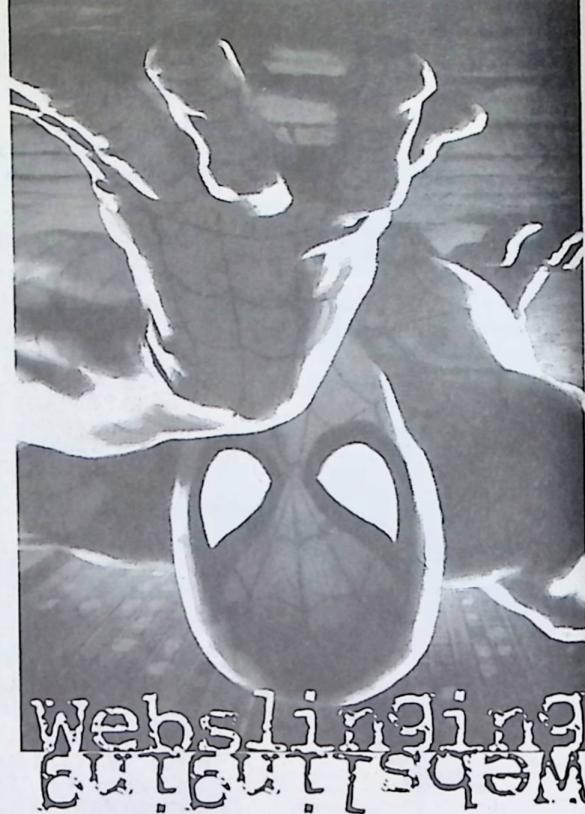
www.fastweb.com

Free scholarship and college searches and financial aid tools.

www.collegequest.com

Peterson's website of everything you need to get organized and get into college.

- Kyle Cohen



Webslinging
cutcutsqem

If you want to know what's happening in the Valley, log onto

www.masslive.com. A local site with affiliations to WGGB and The Union-News, this site can fill you in on the latest news, events, and jobs in the area.

Since Northampton has been the center of the local comic book industry, it's only appropriate to point out the Web-based comic book convention, www.comicon.com. The brainchild of comics greats Rick Veitch and Steve Conley, comicon.com has got all the features of a "real" convention: you can speak with your favorite artist and writers through E-mail, converse with other fans, see cool art and, of course, buy stuff.

Looking for an X-rated site with intelligence and dirty pictures?

Try www.asiacarrera.com. Run by porn star and Mensa member (honest!) Asia Carrera, this site features a lot of interesting stuff, much of which has little to do with the porn industry.

Wanna see what David Bowie's done with his reported \$913 million dollars in earnings? Check out www.davidbowie.com to see one of the web's most visually cutting-edge sites. Then join the ranks of cybergroupies by using bowie.net as your server. (Yes, Bowie can be both your server and master.)

As of this writing the two leading (that is, with the most coverage) multi-search engines are www.northernlight.com (covering 16.5% of the internet) and www.dogpile.com (@15%).

- Dobbs & Murphy

Required Viewing 101

VMag guarantees your cultural maturation with the viewing of these 10 films, all easily accessible on home video (some are available on DVD as well).

2001: A Space Odyssey

Since 1969, people have been mystified, enlightened or enraptured (or all three) by Stanley Kubrick's science fiction exploration of man's past and future. Whether the film is improved, understood, or made even more incomprehensible by the use of controlled substances is a personal call.

Monty Python's Meaning of Life

Nasty, dead-on satire and humor about the human condition from the best comedy group of all time.

Miller's Crossing

This is the Coen Brothers' (*Fargo*, *Raising Arizona*) film that you've probably missed. It's an incredible gangster film with the Coen brand of wit, violence, and technique.

The Lair of the White Worm

No, this isn't a porn movie, but rather a complete over-the-top horror film directed by Great Britain's most excessive film maker, Ken Russell.

Serial Mom

Contemplate the role violence plays in our society when viewing this no-holds-barred John Water's comedy.

Peking Opera Blues

Hong Kong cinema doesn't start and stop with Jackie Chan. Check out this historical drama that is equal parts gender-bender romance, martial arts, political intrigue and music video.

Coffy

One of Pam Grier's classic action drive-in movies from the 1970's. We take our Coffy black, sweet and strong!

Shakes the Clown

Outtacontrol comic Bobcat Goldthwaite's directorial debut is the best alcoholic clown comedy ever set on film.

Reefer Madness

College fads come and go, but some things never change and this hilarious piece of crap is one of them. It's a 1930's exploitation movie that dares to show us the hideous true story behind the marijuana racket.

It's a Gift

One of the true gods of American film comedy was W.C. Fields and this film is perhaps his best.

- Mike Dobbs

Pam Grier



searching for singles

by phil straub



I've got a vinyl jones.

There's no real justification for it. It's simply an obsession. After all, why would anyone want vinyl? It's big, it's bulky, fragile and klunky. Get a bunch of them together and they weigh a ton. They demand attention and care, and deteriorate if you don't give it to them. Who wants that?

Yet, here we are, at least a decade since the CD Revolution went into full swing and record executives everywhere proudly called for the death of vinyl, and records are still being made. Even the new Tom Petty release is out on vinyl, for chrissake. Somebody's got to be buying all this crap. I know I am.

Well, at least for certain things. For instance, I'm a real sucker for 12" singles. In the world of rap, hip-hop and dance, it's often the only way that you can get the remixes, which are usually different from the album mix, and occasionally superior to the original. Sadly, they come out on limited releases and tend to disappear soon after their release: One must strike quickly.

As such, it helps to visit record stores regularly, so as to



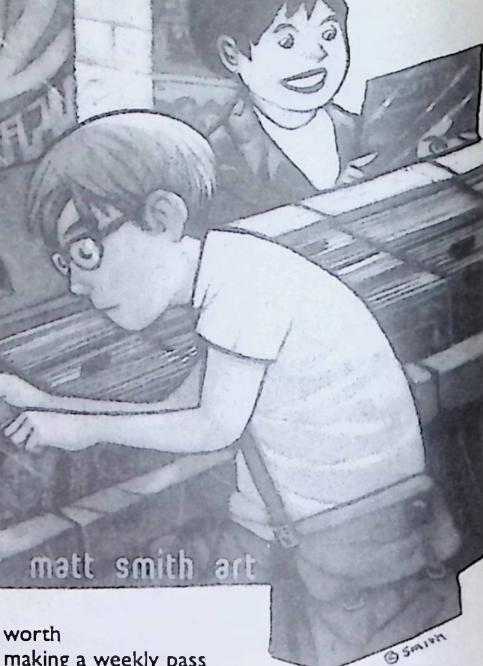
avoid missing out on the gems. Fortunately, there are a number of vinyl-friendly stores in the area to haunt. Best of all, each seem to have their own little niche.

Starting in Amherst, it's best to begin at the **Growroom** in the Carriage Shops. They have sections for all the transmutations of hip-hop and electronica, and also provide a listening station. They get a lot of the latest releases, and I've found stuff there that no one else carries. Definitely worth the trip.

For The Record carries a lot of domestic singles, with quite reasonable prices. I've been buying singles from them for over ten years, and I keep coming back because of their strong selection. Even though the vinyl section has become a lot smaller over the years, it's still there, and still worth going through. If you're looking for a major label domestic single, then try looking here. They've probably got it.

For import singles, your best bet is to go straight to **Newbury Comics**. They have domestic stuff, too, but imports is where they shine. They're a chain, and that gives them the buying clout to pick up stuff that most stores avoid.

Mystery Train is a used store, and therefore doesn't always have the very latest releases. But what they provide is a treasure trove of past gems. It is definitely



matt smith art

worth making a weekly pass through this store, because you never know what they'll have. Chances are, you won't leave empty-handed. Avoid the weekends, though, or you may have to wait in line to use the listening station.

Skip **Hadley** and head straight to Northampton. The stores in the Hampshire Mall are mall stores, and have no patience for vinyl.

In **Northampton**, make **Dynamite Records** your first stop. They get a lot of hip-hop and techno singles, but they get them in low numbers and tend to move through them pretty quickly. They're pretty good about getting stuff back in, but if you miss the initial boat, you may have to wait awhile before you get a second chance.

B-Side Records has a little vinyl section, mostly devoted to used stuff, though I've noticed recently some new singles popping up in there. They don't stay around too long, so it pays to take a quick sweep.

Turn It Up! specializes in used CD's, but they just started a vinyl section, and there have been a few tasty items in there. Worth checking.

Metropolitan Books and Records is also a used store, and they're a consignment shop to boot, so they are definitely limited by what people bring in, and prices vary considerably. They don't have much in the way of singles, but they have a growing soul section, and there's a bunch of stuff there that's worth sampling.

If you've got a car, then you have access to a lot more stores. However, this is a good place to start. Next time, we'll focus on towns outside of the Amherst-Northampton corridor. Until then, happy shopping.

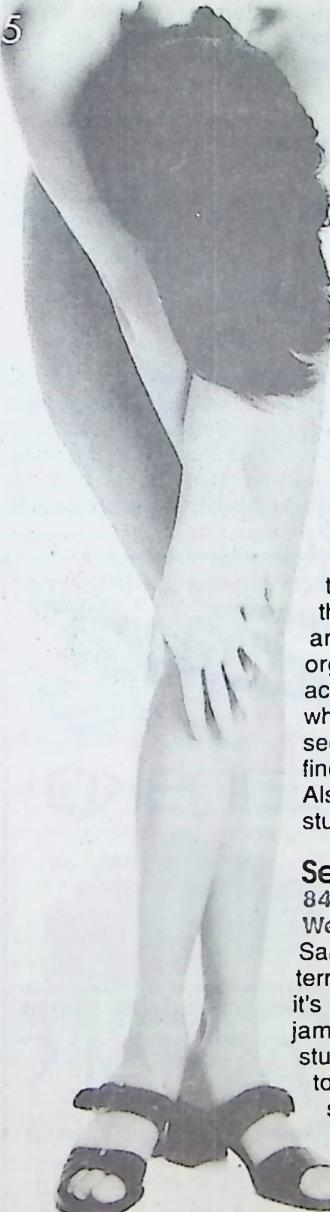
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USED

Second Chance

51 Union Street
Easthampton

You know, I find something every time I go there. It's fun to poke around, it's not totally organized, but that's actually good, because when you search other sections, sometimes you find surprise cool items. Also, she has a lot of stuff if you're small.

Seconds Please

84 Elm Street
Westfield

Same deal as above in terms of organization, but it's bigger (the racks are jammed packed with stuff!!!). Also, she seems to have a lot of retro stuff. Potential poking around for hours. A cool parrot-type bird lives there, too.

Second Showing

9 Market Street
Northampton

This is a great place to sell your clothes if they look completely new (no wrinkles, stains, etc., and it must be a brand name). The owner sells stuff at a higher price, as it tends to be of much better quality (which is good if you're selling to her, because the moola gets passed on to you — she splits it 50/50).

Ultra Gal & Second Nature

50 & 52 Green Street
Northampton

I usually do OK here. Lots of current, cool clothes, good prices. Problem is it's difficult to catch them open. Try weekdays; I usually find them open then, rather than Saturdays.

Roz's Place

6 Bridge Street
Northampton

Roz's has a lot of outrageous clothes (feather boas, 50's style housedresses) and a lot of current styles too, like tiny

tees and big pants. Good selection of piercing jewelry. But what's with the decorative rubber rats?

Better Yet

15 Market Street
Northampton

I kind of find this place to be overly vintage and kind of pricey. They have fun old stuff to decorate your place, though (old dishes, ceramics, etc.). Not really stuff for everyday wear.

Carol's New To You

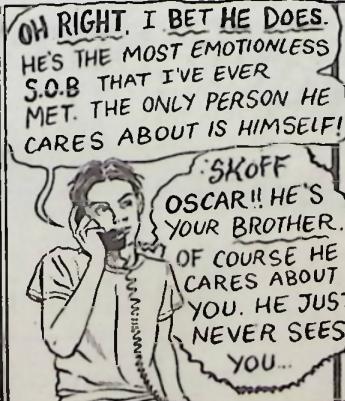
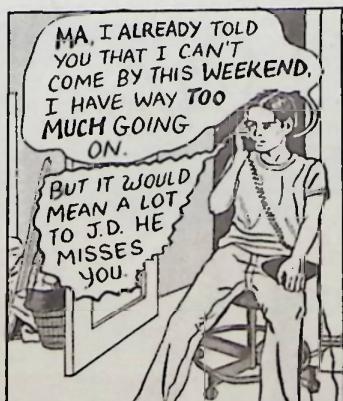
137B Damon Road
Northampton

I find stuff here every now and then. The clothes are in great shape, some decent brands. I think it tends to be a mostly older crowd that patronizes the store, though, because a lot of the stuff seems to be the kind of styles that your mom would wear.

Twice Upon A Time

63 Main Street
Brattleboro

Huge selection of "gently used" clothing (casual to interviewing suits) plus affordable furnishings for dorm or apartment.



Boomerang
63 Elliot Street
Brattleboro
Good, clean selection of new and used clothes. Cool accessories, too.

Of course, there is always the **Salvation Army** stores (Amherst, Greenfield, Northampton, Springfield), but it generally smells kinda funky in there.

NEW

Crystal

176 Main Street, Greenfield
10 Green Street, Northampton

Tons and tons of dresses and skirts, especially those flowy, rayon kind that middle aged women wear, but definitely worth checking out, due to sheer quantity. Kinda pricey, but sometimes you can find a good bargain. The service is great; they help you like the old department

store days. However, I have a lot of trouble with sizes there, as the stores seem of cater to "large" women and a lot of brands that they carry are "one size fits all" which, believe me, don't.

The Mercantile

108 Main Street, Northampton

11 E. Pleasant Street, Amherst

Flowy, rayon dresses / shirts / pants again. Kinda neo-hippie. Can always find something comfortable; some good bargains.

25 Central

Thorne's Market
Northampton

Yes, I love everything here, but prices don't fall into our "cheap" category. If you absolutely need a killer dress, they have great ones — Betsey Johnson, etc. Downstairs, there is very current clothing, tiny tees, co-operative clothing, wide bottom pants and the like. Their great sales racks, though, are what earns

25 Central a spot in this listing.

A good, if somewhat unknown spot to check out

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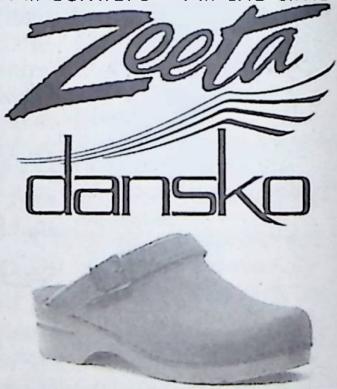
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is Wilson's department store in Greenfield. Name brands. Good sales. Fun store to go to just for the atmosphere. I can always find at least one thing.

Marshall's on the eastern end

of the Post Road, Springfield, is always fun. Although this isn't one of their bigger stores, it's still easy to find something to buy. And hey — who can pass up brand names at bargain prices?

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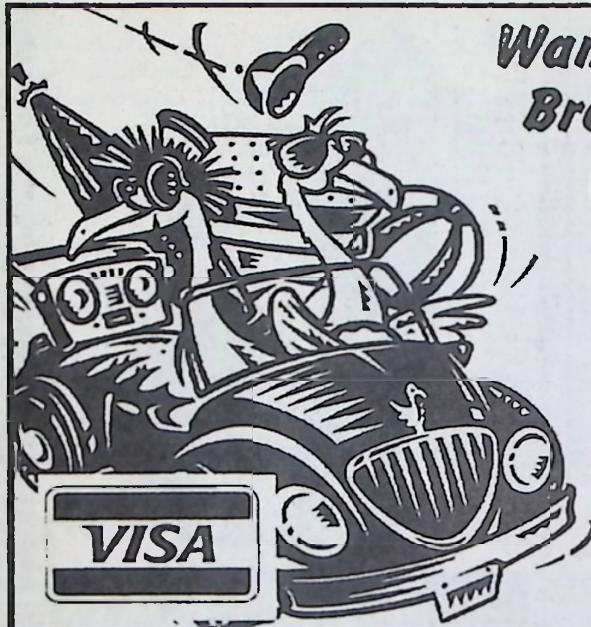
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Cheap Eats

Pig Out

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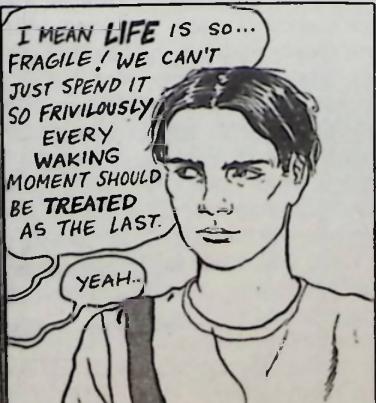
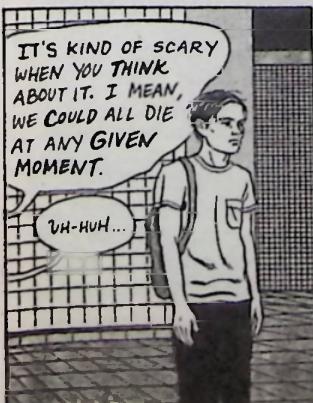
If quantity edges out quality you can certainly fill up on decent food at either of these buffets located on opposite sides of Riverdale Road (Route 5) in West Springfield. Old Country features themes nights (ribs, spaghetti), while Empire serves up a combination of Asian and American dishes. Both are a

notch or two above food-service cuisine and you can eat until you burst.

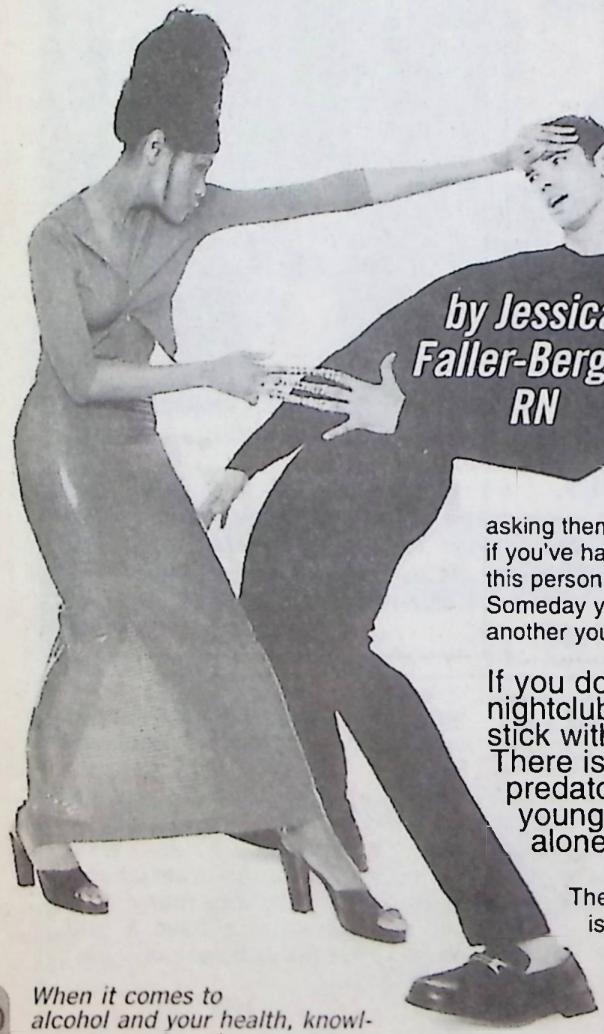
B'SHARA'S

Also on Route 5 in West Springfield, B'Shara's is set up as a cafeteria and features many daily specials. They also have a grill room for steaks and seafood.

- Mike Dobbs



Safety tips for young women who drink



by Jessica Faller-Berger, RN

Before going out, plan who you will be with, how you will get home, how much you will drink, and who you can call for help.

To facilitate the above, form a safety pact with a good friend or responsible adult, by asking them to help you home safely if you've had too much to drink. Call this person in an emergency. Someday you'll do the same thing for another young woman.

If you do drink at a party, nightclub, or bar, please stick with your girlfriends. There is safety in numbers: predators often pick on young women who are alone.

The safest way to use alcohol is to stop at one or two drinks. Do you have trouble limiting your alcoholic intake during a night on the town? If so, try the

following game plan. At a bar, make your first drink a soda or juice with a twist. No one needs to know what's in your glass. Make your second drink a "half-measure" (for example, purchase a regular screwdriver with only a half-shot of vodka). For your third drink order another soda. By the time everyone else has had three drinks, your intake will total 1/2 a shot. The fourth drink you order will be your second "half measure." Your fifth drink will be another soda. Continue to alternate half measures of alcohol with soft drinks. By the time you reach your ninth "drink",

your alcohol intake will total two shots.

Accept the compliment of a male stranger buying you a drink, but not the drink itself. There are some losers who expect sex in exchange for drinks. Your body and soul are not to be bartered for booze.

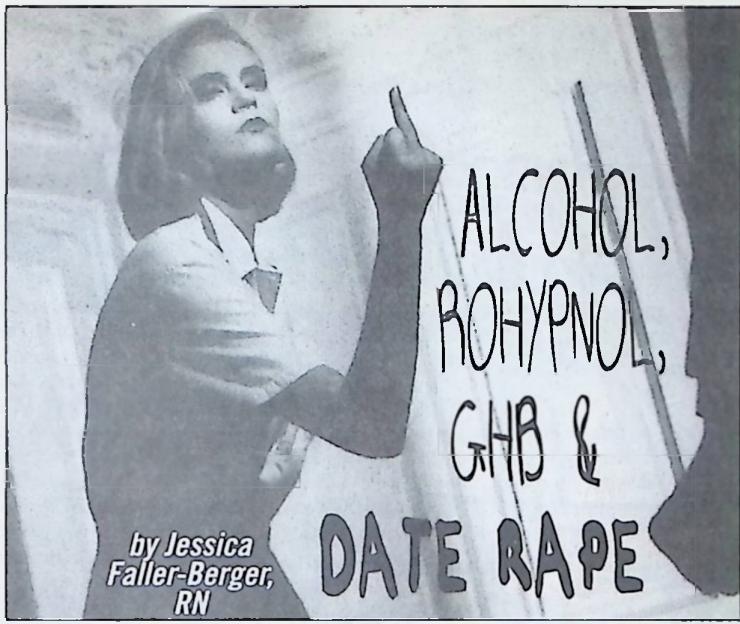
Never leave a bar, nightclub or party with a stranger. To do so is a formula for disaster. Exchange phone numbers instead. If he's genuinely interested in you, he'll call. Help your girlfriends to carry this out, no matter how cute the guy is.

Get to know a date or new boyfriend before you drink with him. Don't get into a car alone with a guy you do not trust completely, especially if you have been drinking.

There are at least 150 medications that are unsafe when taken with alcohol. Before you drink, ask your pharmacist about drug-alcohol interactions. Absolutely avoid all downers, valium, xanax, phenobarbital and antihistamines (such as Benadryl) when drinking. These drugs compound the effects of alcohol. Taken together, they can stop your breathing. Never take aspirin, ibuprofen, or Aleve for a hangover. The result could be gastrointestinal bleeding. Prevent liver damage by avoiding Tylenol and rifampin with alcohol.

Never leave your drink unattended under any circumstances.

10
When it comes to alcohol and your health, knowledge is power. If you choose to drink, there are specific facts that can help you to stay safer and healthier. In this article, we'll explore the medical consequences of drinking, and ways to protect yourself from these effects. In reality, no amount of strategizing around alcohol consumption will be completely foolproof. This is because alcohol's effects on the brain, and its subsequent impact upon your plans, can be unpredictable. The safest choice regarding alcohol is total abstinence (the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence recently announced that one third of American adults don't drink at all).



by Jessica
Faller-Berger,
RN

By lowering your defenses and slowing your reflexes, alcohol makes girls easy prey for rapists. Reports from the US Department of Health and Human Services indicate that 55% of rape victims were using alcohol at the time of sexual assault, and that girls who drink with unsafe people run a higher risk of being sexually assaulted. Becoming drunk and then passing out greatly amplifies this risk. Again, never leave drinks unattended. Furthermore, only accept alcohol from someone who has your best interest in mind.

This precaution follows on the heels of nationwide reports implicating the

use of three new drugs associated with sexual assault: Rohypnol, GHB, and Clonazepam. These drugs have invaded raves, nightclubs, parties, high schools, college campuses, fraternities, and gangs. Worse, these drugs not only facilitate rape, they also can kill.

Since the 1990's, the illicit "date rape drug" (Rohypnol) and "grievous bodily harm" (GHB) have gained alarming notoriety. For two dollars, a potential rapist can purchase a colorless, odorless liquid or pill to drop into their unsuspecting victim's drink.

Rohypnol acts synergistically with alcohol, overcoming the victim, rendering her powerless to resist assault. The incapacitating effects of Rohypnol include muscle relaxation, hypnosis, sedation, amnesia, drowsiness, low blood pressure, coma, and even death. This drug is most lethal when

given with alcohol or other depressants. Street names for Rohypnol include rophies, roofies, roach, rope, rib, circles, whitey's, lunch money, pappas, potatoes, negatives, pluses, or roches dos.

GHB (gamma-hydroxybutyrate) emerges as yet another monstrosity in the sexual offender's arsenal. Its use as a date rape drug is well documented. GHB causes nausea, vomiting, seizures, dizziness, confusion, intense drowsiness, unconsciousness, respiratory depression, and even coma. An effect which protects rapists from being identified, amnesia may also occur after ingesting GHB. However, it may be possible to taste the drug in your drink because of its mild saltiness (nevertheless, GHB's detection is made difficult due to its colorlessness and odorlessness). Street names for GHB include liquid ecstasy, somatomax, scoop, soap, gook, gamma 10, easy lay, energy drink, and Georgia Home Boy. Rapists also abuse the prescription drug **clonazepam**.

If you are going to drink, then drinking with girlfriends in the privacy of your own home affords you the best protection against drug induced date rape. However, if you should find yourself drinking in public, carefully guard your beverage. A stranger can easily slip one of these life-altering substances into your cocktail.

Helpful suggestions aimed at the prevention of drug-induced rape include bringing your own alcohol to parties, not drinking from a container being passed around, not drinking anything with a salty taste, and not drinking anything that you did not open yourself.



Survivors of drug-induced sexual assault may want to know about the passage of a bill in Congress called the Drug Induced Rape Prevention Act of 1996. This legislation mandates strong penalties against anyone who "uses a controlled substance to aid sexual assault."



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With heroin chic no longer a hot button issue, drugs have fallen to the rear sections of our papers. Monica and Milosevic are much better sellers than stories about marginalized people in our nation. The reality is that intravenous drug use is a fact of our daily American lives and we might want to deal with it. Here in Northampton, we like to believe that Holyoke is and has the problem. When drugs are here, then it's just spill-over from those awful gangstas down the road. From my own prior poly-substance abuse history, I can tell you that this Polyanic notion is pure myth. I lived in a house full of addicts in Hadley; corn field on one side, tobacco field on the other. Not exactly the mean streets, eh? So who is using needle exchange programs? I recently had the privilege to sit down with Timothy Purington, the director of Tapestry Health System's Harm Reduction Services, the organization that runs the Northampton Needle Exchange. The idea behind needle exchange is that since addiction is a medical issue, maybe providing users with clean, safe needles will cut down the growth of AIDS, HIV, hepatitis and other communicable diseases. People who join this anonymous program are issued an identity card and thus immune from prosecution on possession of a syringe or needle (this does not mean they won't be convicted for possession of illegal drugs). One of the main problems with the statute is that local police departments vary on their view of this immunity and there have not been any real test cases to define the law more clearly. (It saved my ass a while ago, but my probation is long over, so let's move on.)

The majority of people enrolled in the program are white; not our usual, racist view of the typical Latino/Black user, but maybe your next door neighbor. Many are women, most are men; the ages average out in the mid-to-late twenties, which means that large numbers of young people are using. With the slashing of veteran's services, many Vietnam-era veterans are now enrolling in the pro-

gram and seeking out aid. Harm Reduction Services provides much more than the exchange of needles. Education, prevention, counseling and lots of community outreach are less well known aspects of the program. Northampton is a primarily white community and between 25 to 30% of the exchange's clientele are under the age of 25. The student next to you on the bus might be one of them. The notion that we just might be talking literature, discussing current political and social events, dating, or just rubbing elbows with these fiends is simply appalling. I remember my last couple of years as an undergrad at UMASS. I couldn't make it through a class or my on-campus job, without making that quick trip to the bathroom. There was this great CompLit class that I took on modern poetry; I think it was called Modern Poetry. The prof. was great, as were most of the students. The problem was that a particularly annoying MFA student was in the class as well. When this student started speaking I'd be on my way to the fifth floor, Herter Hall, men's room. Sit down, tie off, shoot up, then back to class with the slightest stain of blood on the sleeve of my preppy, button-down, shirt. That was the only way I could deal with a conversation on how unpopular the use of the present participle was in contemporary poetry.

Yeah, I was a college junky. There are few bathrooms at UMASS that I haven't shot up in (not to mention a couple at Amherst College and every restaurant in the Valley). I guess my point here, besides the narcissism that makes me write anything, is that when we talk about drugs in society, we need to have a realistic view of what's going on. Addicts are people in need. They don't deserve to die just because they're fucked up. If I hadn't utilized needle exchange while I was using, then nobody would have the opportunity to complain about these columns, reviews, and articles I keep thrusting upon you. All sarcasm aside, we need to force our communities to foster a therapeutic, medical view of addiction and drug dependency. Locking people up is a great way to remove a user's ability to change their lives. Many state funded jobs ban the employment of people convicted of class-A possession for ten years. Way to lend support to people in need, huh? What is the debt to society someone owes for destroying themselves? If users don't fall into the categories TV crime dramas have invented for us, then what do we do about them? High school kids, college kids, moms and dads, people with careers, hopes, dreams, ambitions- these are intravenous drug users. I will always be an addict, but because of a program like the Northampton Needle Exchange, people like Tim

Purington, and the love of my wife Cookie, I am now an addict in recovery.

Our lives are intertwined with the people around us and the way our laws are made is directly linked to who we choose to make them for us. We need to push for changes in the law, expanded services and increased funding. Most Americans want to help people and improve lives, but voter apathy allows things like welfare-reform, tough on crime bills and other racist, anti-poor legislation to be passed on through. It is clearly the notion that intravenous drug use primarily affects the poor and minorities (often synonymous terms), that allows us to look the other way. Let's take our collective head out of the sand. Northampton Needle Exchange is located on the second floor of 16 Center Street in lovely downtown Northampton and is a safe, non-judgmental place to go if you need it. The staff include ex-users, people that have had users in their families, or are professionals in the field. If you want info, go on down; they're great people and know what they're doing. If you don't need services, maybe you can go down and find out how to educate yourself and others on the issues and learn ways to fight anti-exchange groups in your towns. After much political rhetoric from the local politicians, needle exchange was killed in Springfield by a right-wing civic group. This should be a call to arms for any socially responsible individuals to get together and do things. The Moral Majority can't be the only ones that have the ability to affect social change in this country. How many self-righteous, baby-boomers that are now pillars of our communities, experimented, used, and abused illegal substances in their past? Buying into the upper-middle class doesn't mean they are released from social responsibility, Republican tax cuts be damned.

(In 1997, the NNE gave out 12,721 needles; in 1998, 39,648.)

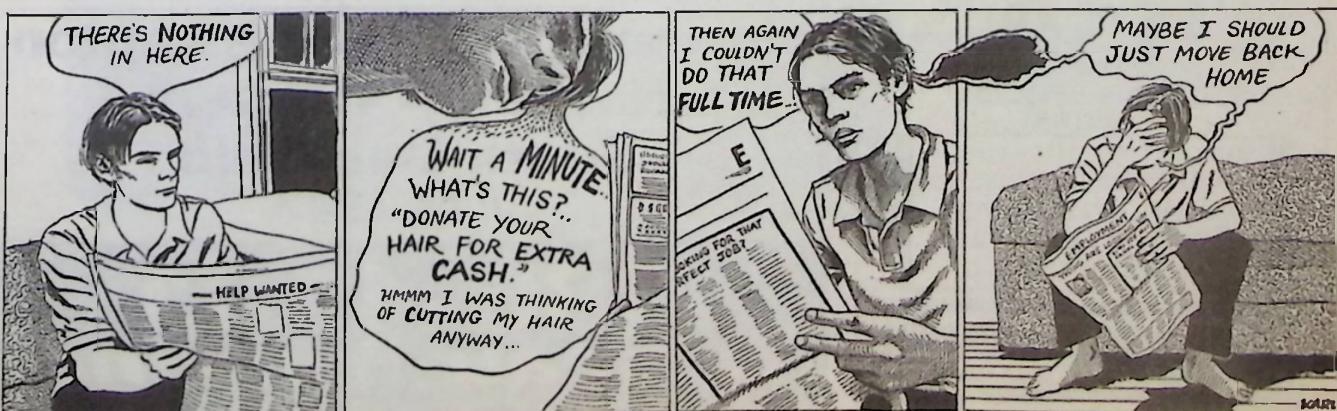
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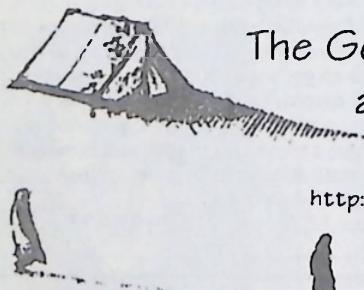
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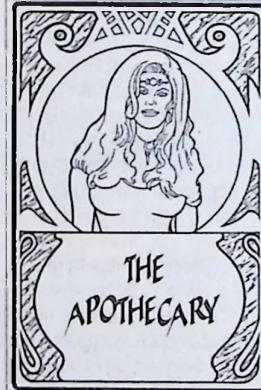
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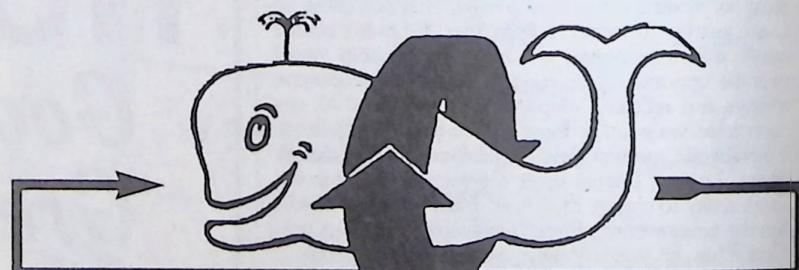
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A Guide to Easthampton

by Duke Aaron (Il Duce)
illustrations by Matt Smith



There's a problem with writing a "guide to Easthampton." What could it be, you must be asking yourself? One gets off one's duff, goes to the Chamber of Commerce, lists all the restaurants and businesses, then collects a check from Murphy. Well, that's the problem. Easthampton is more than a collection of business interests. My favorite place in the town is my back yard. Althea, my wonder-dog, cools off in the kiddy pool with her buddies (yes, they're dogs as well), I look at my tomato plants, feed the birds, read the paper, you know, reg'lar stuff. This is a community of people and families, and I love just walking down the streets. Easthampton is a porch town. A front porch town. Just about everywhere you go has one-to-three family homes, front porches decorated with flowers and flags. People sit on them. They say hello as you walk by. They talk with husbands and wives. Neighbors and friends visit. I love it. Lawns are mowed, gardens planted, barbecues given, and after growing up in the scummiest section of Brockton, MA, this place is like a slice of Heaven.

Having said my spiel, it is now important to talk about the restaurant and business community. A guide is for people from elsewhere; local residents know for themselves what they like or don't like about the Town, I mean, *City*, of Easthampton. There is a sense of growth and new beginnings for Easthampton. This old factory town is currently struggling with the realization that manufacturing jobs are a thing of the past. No, this is not unique in America at the end of the century, but what is unique is the surprising smoothness of the transition to something else, something not better, but different.

The Sage Gallery just opened. The place is gorgeous,

large, and filled with the work of western Mass artists. It has a juice bar. A juice bar? They'll be opening a pottery studio and private artist studios next door pretty soon. Coming on the heels of **Flywheel's** somewhat recent opening, Easthampton appears to be on the verge of a renaissance. Flywheel, operated by the Valley Arts and Music Alliance is a spot where art, literature, music, and politics come together in a most friendly and open way. This collective is straddling a line of being cutting edge and community oriented. They have the largest collections of 'zines in this part of the state and encourage people to just come and hang out. A special place and well worth being involved in or just visiting. The Good Book, opened and closed, but was snatched up almost immediately. By the time this article sees print, The

Cottage Street Book Store and Cafe has just opened in that space. Specializing in used books, they also serve a coffee and tea and have an antique soda fountain. I hope to be spending many an hour sitting around, drinking coffee, reading books, and missing VMag deadlines. It's almost next door to **Nini's Restaurant**, a favorite dinner spot of mine. This brings me to the subject of food. If you want to drop some cash on a great meal, **Zoe's Fish and Chop House** is the place to go. Having personal knowledge of what isn't in my bank account, I must tell you that **The Silver Spoon** is, without a doubt, the place to be for breakfast or lunch. The food is awesome and the portions are large (try the "Lumberjack"). With a host of regulars and a staff that will remember

you, I try not to miss my Sunday attendance. The recently opened **Sunrise Bakery**, has everything a sweet-tooth requires, but I go mostly for their sandwiches. They serve a good pickle and that is my highest criteria: no pickle, no patronage. At **Imagine**, on Union Street, you can get an individual pot of tea (ten choices) or plunge coffee as you wait for a sandwich made on homemade bread. With its ever-changing menu of "peasant gourmet fare" the emphasis is on fresh, with intimate service and attention to detail. After a good lunch, if I have some writing to do, then I will often head out for a drink or two and blow it off for a while. Yeah, there are a few bars in town. **Leoni's Pub**, **Peanuts**, and probably somewhere else that I don't know of, but the spot for me is **The Brass Cat**. This place is just plain cool. They make good drinks, have swill, as well as good beer on tap, and have friendly customers and bartenders. Often, there are bands playing at night (mostly weekends) and there's usually a good game of pool and/or darts going on. If not, there's always the ubiquitous Keno. They have a "Brass Cat" statue outside and it gets dressed up for holidays and changes in the season. Yeah, the owner probably has too much time on his hands, but I think that it's a nice touch.

Have I given the impression that Easthampton is a conflict-free zone? Not true. This is a BMX city. It is nearly impossible to see a kid not doing some kind of terrifying and dangerous stunt on his (or her) bike. Some people think this is a problem, some don't, some couldn't care less. If you stop by **Easthampton Bicycle**, you can get the kids' viewpoint. This is the hangout and main parts and accessory supply for Easthampton's deadly daredevil riders. I have enough trouble walking upright, so I only stopped by for research purposes, but I was impressed. Unlike our northern sister city, some businesses here realize that the yutes are citizens, deserve

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respect, and have disposable income. Imagine that. On the flip side to BMX, you should check out **CMC Music Room**. The owner, Scott, carries new and used instruments and amps, new and used CD's, tapes, and even vinyl; he is also just a good guy all around. His shop, like the bike store, is in touch with the youth market. He knows everyone by name and can usually be found in deep conversation with some kid that might just be the next big thing. Scott is pretty involved with the community and was a driving force in the recent *Take Back The Night*, uh, thingy, where the cops threw a party. CMC Music Room set up a stage and sound system. Cappuccino Jellybean, Tag Sale, and the great Angry Johnny and The Killbillies played. BMX ramps were set up and these kids were amazing. There was a drug dog demonstration (but you can't have everything be perfect, right?). Lots of stuff went on, including a martial arts demo. I had a blast, but would like to ask why there are at least seven martial arts studios here? I mean, that seems to be a lot, right? It should also be noted that **Fat Trax** is here (as well as in East Longmeadow) and has a great selection of skate board equipment and accessories. It's a little off the beaten path from town, but worth the short drive. There are two places that really need to be shown off as bridges from Easthampton's past to Easthampton's future: **One Cottage Street** and **Eastworks**. These are old factory buildings that have been renovated and now house businesses. One Cottage Street has a pottery studio, some small presses, a cafe, and the ultra-cool, **Valley Woman's Martial Arts**, as well as much more.

Eastworks, original home of **VMag**, is an absolutely amazing facility. The place has like a million square feet or something. The third floor has artist studios of varying sizes and **Photographer Mark Rea** graciously showed me his beautiful studio/living space. He does commercial, fine art, and portrait photography and really let me know what a great place **Eastworks** is for the artists in residence. They have high-quality living spaces, with plenty of up-to-date work areas, and are able

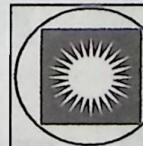
to network with the host of other artists around them. (His friend Bill was there and did some pretty cool juggling of five potatoes.) Then I got to see some floor plans of areas they are still working on. When construction is completely finished, this is going to be a world class artist showcase. The scope and vision involved is astounding. I met Jessica Kleinman (keep an eye out because her upcoming wedding, at **Eastworks**, is gonna have a spread in Martha Stewart), one of the owners of **The Clayspot**. Their first floor space is under construction right now, but they are partially open. When they're ready it will be a fully equipped ceramics facility. They will have studio rentals, classes, a retail gallery. The first floor will eventually be filled with businesses which will all open on to a center court. Beautiful old factory windows are being refurbished and will allow a gallery court to be made. The possibilities for artists to retail wares will be astounding. The second floor is full of businesses and the basement level has full-scale loading docks and ware-housing facilities. **Heavy Metal Magazine** is being distributed out of there and work for Staples is providing much needed area jobs with a look towards even more in the future. There are also a yoga studio, **Mama Nirvana**; a massage center, **Qi Center**; and classes to help people succeed in business and in life. The most impressive thing about **Eastworks**, besides all this, was the sense of friendship and people working together. Yeah, the networking thing is great, but in addition to that, the first name basis everyone had

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in a facility this large was special. With a place like Eastworks as the future, it is also important to keep ties to the past.

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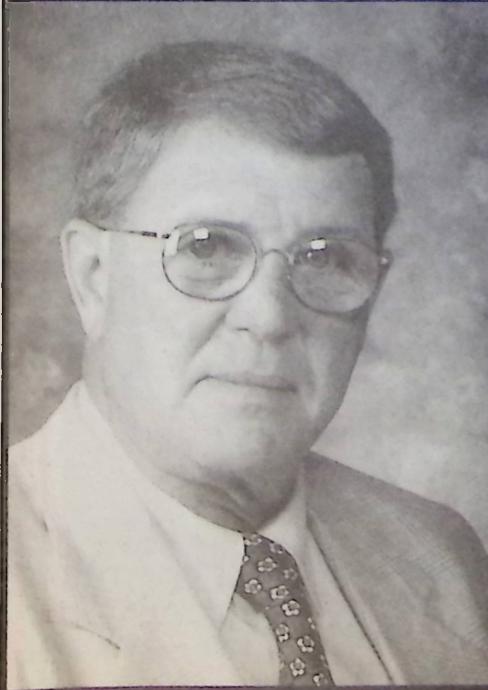
We've also got **Tasty Top** (a soft ice cream place), a driving range, The prestigious **Williston-Northampton Academy**, and just about everything a growing city should have (plus more, more, more). The **Arcadia Bird Sanctuary**, access to Mt. Tom, farms, community groups, churches... the

key to this place is an involved community and a whole lot of people with forward-looking plans. The other key is another set of people that want to keep the nice, friendly outlook of small town America and as these two normally opposing forces learn to work together Easthampton will shine brighter and brighter. Less than a decade ago, this up-and-coming location was dying. Now, like the proverbial Phoenix...

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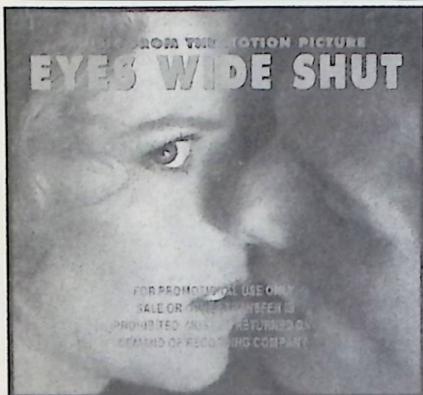
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EYES WIDE SHUT

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Listening to the disc of **Eyes Wide Shut**, Stanley Kubrick's thirteenth and final film, one gets the sense that the soundtrack must have been a hell of a lot of fun for the director to put together. Ranging from a Viennese waltz to 90's blues/pop, the selections almost seem to give a stylistic overview of what was going on musically throughout the 20th century. And given Kubrick's unequalled talent for matching music to images, it's not surprising that the compositions assembled here, whether classical or popular, not only sit well together but shift from frivolous to spellbinding.

The album begins with the icy and atonal "Musica Ricercata," a brooding piano piece by Gyorgy Ligeti, the Hungarian composer from whose work Kubrick had already tapped for tracks in **2001: A Space Odyssey** and **The Shining**. Used four times in **Eyes Wide Shut** — in various wordless sequences — the piece, although composed simply in half-tones and octaves, contains enough power and foreboding to shatter the clichés of conventional suspense music. Its inclusion in the scene where Tom Cruise's character receives a letter of warning, is especially noteworthy as it provides another example of Kubrick executing the timing of an entire scene to a carefully selected classical piece.

No less inspired is the use of the grandiose "Waltz 2," written for Shostokovich's **Jazz Suite**, which opens and closes the film. This is Kubrick's first inclusion of a waltz since **2001**, and its droll and laconic melody seems to comment on and complement the early action in the film, its "perfect time" tempo infused with an undercurrent of loneliness and longing. Indeed its exclusion from **Eyes Wide Shut** would be unimaginable. It seems to have been

written for the film.

Several compositions however have been written for the project — in the tradition of the work of Wendy Carlos and Abigail Mead for **The Shining** and **Full Metal Jacket** — here by Jocelyn Pook. "Masked Ball" is especially unforgettable, lending the orgy sequence a haunting medieval quality reminiscent of some of the work of the Dead Can Dance.

On the other hand, the soundtrack's moodier musings give way to such lighter, jazzier pieces such as "I Got It Bad (And That's Not Good)" and "Blame It On My Youth." Roy Gerson's interpretation of "If I Had You," briefly heard in the film in the lounge scene, is an absolute delight, presented in the three-piece style with toe-tapping charm. All the pieces on the disc, despite their eclectic variability, manage to somehow complement one another, suggesting the movements of a symphony. The soundtrack is unforgettable and is testimony to the enduring genius of Stanley Kubrick. Play it.

- Gene Kane



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In 1955 Art Blakey and Horace Silver formed the Jazz Messengers and sent out the message that bebop was alive and evolving. In 1956 Silver left to form his own quintet and forward the gospel of soul jazz, the most popular jazz form of the 60's. Blakey continued to teach the ways of the most dominant jazz style of the 60's: hard bop. Tenor Saxophonist Javon Jackson, described as an "intrepid jazz explorer," takes us for a tour of this junction of jazz genius on his latest release, **Pleasant Valley**.

The 33 year-old Mississippi

native is joined by organ player Larry Goldings who also provides much of the bottom as this is a bass-less quartet. A Jimmy Smith disciple, Goldings has a subtle and soulful style developed in the company of Jon Hendricks and Maceo Parker. Joining Goldings is fellow Boston-area native Billy Drummond who has been Jackson's drummer of choice for some time. Guitarist Dave Stryker was introduced to Javon by legendary tenorman Stanley Turrentine. I caught Stryker at the Van Dyck in Schenectady last winter with Turrentine and the guitarist was absolutely brilliant. He continued to impress with a turn as a resident artist at this summer's Vermont Jazz Center workshops in Brattleboro. On **Pleasant Valley**, Stryker distinguishes himself again.

The set is well divided into, but not limited to, hard bop and soul jazz. The first cut is Ellington's "Sun Swept Sunday," a sweet and eerie ballad that ends on a ghostly note from Golding's organ. Jackson gets in the groove on his original composition, "Pleasant Valley," which features a dynamic fusion inspired wah-wah solo from Stryker. Hard bop reigns with a tip of the horn to Wayne Shorter on Joe Zawinul's "Hippodelphia." Stryker shines again with an expressive and intricate solo while solid propulsion is provided by Drummond. The groove returns on the next cut, Stevie Wonder's "Don't You Worry 'Bout A Thing," which features great sax and organ interplay between Jackson and Goldings as they trade the melody back and forth and interweave solos. The organist contributes the next composition, "Jim Jam," and Goldings and Jackson exchange once again, this time in a hard bop vein. Two more Jackson originals follow. "In the Pocket" has a real James Brown feel. "Brother G," dedicated to close friend Kenny Garrett, is a reflective return to hard bop featuring a soaring tenor solo from the leader and an exotic acoustic performance from Stryker. The session continues with Al Green's soulful "Love and Happiness." The quartet must love this tune as they careen it and make it their own. Jackson recalls Gene Ammons and Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis as he sails through the groove laid down by Goldings, Stryker, and Drummond. The set ends with "For One Who Knows," a pressure cooker penned by Jackson and dedicated to trumpeter Freddie Hubbard. Stryker provides another fusion-rich solo, and an edgy background to this modal sizzler that starts with sax and drums soloing together. It also features amazing bass pedal work from Golding.

- Bud Callahan

reviews



OS MUTANTES EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE

Luaka Bop

Os Mutantes (the Mutants) were a São Paulo, Brazil-based trio that recorded four albums between 1967 and 1972. Comprised of singer Rita Lee and brothers Arnaldo and Sérgio Baptista, Os Mutantes, along with fellow countrymen Gilberto Gil, Tom Ze and Caetano Veloso, were a cornerstone of the Tropicalia movement, a prankster-esque marriage of music, politics and theater that shook the Brazilian cultural establishment to the core.

Incorporating influences from the Beatles, doo wop and the entire universe of Brazilian musical traditions, the trio employed a vast array of instruments and implements, from rubber hoses, bug spray cans and inverted wah-wah pedals to horns and strings, to create South America's first psychedelic sounds. Os Mutantes' appearance, with electric guitars in tow, at the influential 2nd Festival of Brazilian Popular Music in 1967 elicited the same audience response that Bob Dylan encountered when he plugged in at Newport in 1965; the traditionalists were not ready for the next new wave.

Talking Heads founder David Byrne, who has single-handedly introduced America to a host of exquisite sounds from Brazil, has compiled a new 14-song anthology, **Everything is Possible**, that spans the four-album career of the original Mutants. It is a joy from start to finish. The first cut, "Ando Meio Desligado" (I feel a little spaced out) starts with a bass line copped from the Zombie's "Time of the Season" and describes the euphoric effects of pot. "Cantor De Mambo," about making it as a mambo singer in America, is an incredibly tasty ditty with hypnotic Brazilian

rhythms, Santana-like guitar riffs and doo wop vocal parts. "Panis Et Circenses" is a spacy musical collage; at one point the producer's voice can be heard over clinking glasses and dishes while the "Blue Danube" waltz plays in the background.

The lyrics to the songs are excellent; even when they're political Os Mutantes radiate humor and poetry. This disc is big fun. Thirty years after these recordings were made, they sound as fresh and seductive as ever.

- Dave Biederman



CATALYST THE FUNKIEST BAND YOU NEVER HEARD

32 Groove

Aah, Catalyst. They broke out of Philadelphia in the early 70's and transformed the way we thought about music. Well, not quite. But they did all earn themselves a career in music... that much is true. Eddie Green (keyboards) played with everyone from Etta James to Miles Davis, while Odean Pope (tenor saxophone) and Tyrone Brown (bass) could be found in Max Roach's double quartet. There's also Sherman Ferguson (drums), Anthony Jackson (bass) and countless other musicians over their four-record existence. They are pretty obscure, but the title of this collection may be a little misleading.

They're not entirely funky. Certainly not in the way of keyboard-driven Blue Note records of the late sixties. Rather, these guys were on the cusp of the jazz fusion movement, following alongside the paths of Miles Davis, Herbie Hancock and others. They managed to combine what they had learned in jazz with what they loved in R&B, creating a hybrid that was ahead of its time. The fact that this style of music has since become more acceptable to a mass audi-

ence makes it all the more unfortunate that these guys didn't get their due. Until now.

32 Jazz has taken all four records by this ensemble (**Catalyst**, **Unity**, **Perception**, and **A Tear and A Smile**) and lovingly assembled them onto one two-disc set.

The first record on the collection, **Catalyst** (recorded in 1972), is perhaps my favorite, being the funkiest record of the four. It also features some very nice fretless basswork by Al Johnson, especially on "Jabali" and "New-Found Truths." It's a strong effort by this outfit, though the first song, "Ain't It The Truth," almost seems out of place: this funky little number gives off a pop-funk groove that can't be found anywhere else... on this or any of the other three records. It also features Norman Harris on guitar, who plays a more prominent role on their second album, **Perception**.

Perception was also recorded in 1972, but here they've managed to expand their ideas in the progressive arena, thanks in part to Norman Harris's exceptionally spacey guitar work (check out the title track). While Eddie Green was responsible for the majority of the songs on the first record, for this one he contributes only one track, allowing some space for the other members, including Odeon Pope, who contributes two strong efforts ("Ille Ife" and the otherworldly "Celestial Bodies").

By the third record, the band's goals and vision had changed somewhat. They were still on the periphery of the musical spectrum, but by now it didn't seem to bother them. On the contrary, they seemed to be much more comfortable with the situation. Rather than try to appease the masses, they seemed to be writing for each other, expanding their horizons by reaching as far into themselves as their arms would allow. Of course, it's not all about expansion, as the first song, "A Country Song," is about the closest they get to a pop/rock crossover number. This song gives them an opportunity to utilize a bunch of gadgetry, including a wah-wah pedal on Eddie Green's electric keyboard and the fuzzed out lead bass of (new additional personnel) Alphonso Johnson. Perhaps most ambitious is Tyrone Brown's "Athene," which includes two drummers, two violinists (with solos by the great John Blake), and three flutists. All told, it is quite an atmospheric piece, owing much to the music of the East (not too surprising, considering that all of Brown's contributions tend to stretch musically).

music

outside America's borders).

Their fourth album, **A Tear And A Smile**, truly stretches their boundaries... sad, then, that this would prove to be their last record. It would have been nice to see where they went from here. The album has much of what one had, by this point, come to expect... a couple of international pieces, coupled with a fusion piece or two, and some experiments with (then) modern electronic technology. For the gizmo-driven piece, we have "The Demon, Parts One and Two." "Part One" introduces us to the demon and the inevitable chase. "Part Two," perhaps my favorite piece on the record, is a simple warning about demons ("don't never let them get you") thrown into a nice funk groove. "Bahia" is their international nod, with guest Farel Johnson giving us a crash course in the percussion-mad world of Yoruban music. There's also a vocal piece ("A Prayer Dance") and a boogie number ("Fifty Second Street Boogie Down"). And let us not forget Tyrone Brown, whose contribution this time around consists of an ambitious attempt to synthesize his interests in jazz, classical and Spanish musics.

Overall, this was a band with a lot of influences, who had the rare ability to combine all of those elements into one cohesive entity. They were funky, but they were so much more. It's nice to see them back in the marketplace.

- Phil Straub



SWING WEST! VOLS. 1-3 Razor & Tie

If you like good ol' country music, then you will love **Swing West!**, a new series of compilations from Razor & Tie. They all focus on Western Swing, a style of music that brought the swingin' beat of big band jazz to a country audi-

ence. It started in Oklahoma and Texas, but had spread to California by World War II. By that point, it was all over. The slick stylings of Country Honky Tonk players just about took over the whole movement... at least that's what this series would have you believe. It stays mostly in the Southern California region, but don't let that stop you. Californian country has always been a great counterpoint to the industry standard of Nashville. There are a lot of classic artists on this collection, but many of them have been doomed to obscurity by the CD revolution. That's what makes this series great: Not only are the selections top-notch, but the time period that they pull from (the forties to the mid-sixties) is woefully underrepresented in today's market.

Volume One (Bakersfield) is devoted to that great city north of LA. Once Elvis shook things up for everyone in the mid-fifties, Nashville responded by targeting an adult-friendly, pop-crossover demographic. They loaded up with strings and sugary backing vocals. Not Bakersfield, though. They stayed country. Strong fiddles and steel guitars, earthy vocals and snappy guitar licks were the backbone of the Bakersfield Sound. Buck Owens, Merle Haggard and, more recently, Dwight Yoakum are all strong examples of this sound. However, this disc deals with the more obscure and unduly forgotten artists of the movement, like Tommy Duncan, who has two songs on here. Buck Owens got his start playing blistering leads in Tommy's band, and is heavily influenced by Tommy's vocal delivery. The great Rose Maddox is on here, with "Kissing My Pillow" and "Sing a Little Song of Heartache." Overall, the collection has tear-in-my-beer quality to it that makes one think of darkly lit, half-empty barrooms populated by regulars. There are, however, a few up tempo numbers, like Red Simpson's classic "The Highway Patrol."

Volume Two (Guitar Swingers) is dominated by the flying fingers of chicken-pickin' guitar slingers. The blistering speed of Jimmy Bryant is put to the test on "Little Rock Getaway," while his "T-Bone Rag" has a much more easy-going feel. Les Paul, the Wizard of Waukesha, shows off his picking skills with "Chicken Reel." Joe Maphis will keep would-be guitarists scratching their heads as he switches off on guitar, banjo, mandolin and then back to guitar on "Fire on the Strings." Merle Travis smokes on "Merle's Boogie Woogie," flat-picking so fast that it sounds like the CD's skipping. Ferlin Husky turns in a

jazzy "Caravan" and Roy Lanham contributes a wonderful version of the Charlie Christian showpiece, "A Smooth One." This is a real treat because as guitar player for the Sons of the Pioneers, Roy was rarely able to show off his jazz licks.

Volume Three (Western Swing) pulls out all the stops. Merrill Moore's version of boogie woogie was like rock and roll with a steel guitar. His "Down The Road Apiece" is included here, as is Cliffie Stone's "Barracuda," which could easily pass for some Bill Haley number. Tex Williams' great nod about the evils of tobacco, "Smoke! Smoke! Smoke! (That Cigarette)," is included, as are a couple of very jazzy instrumentals by his band, The Western Caravan. "Cowboy Opus No. 1," for example, is propelled by a Django Reinhardt-like rhythm while the phrasing would be more at home in the modernist movement that swept jazz in the early fifties. Ole Rasmussen & Nebraska Cornhuskers manage to pull off an excellent interpretation of Duke Ellington's "C Jam Blues," while Deuce Spriggen's "Red Hot Mama" could have easily fit in the repertoire of Jack Teagarden.

All three volumes are great additions to anyone's collection.

(www.razorandtie.com)

- Phil Straub



ANI DIFRANCO & UTAH PHILLIPS FELLOW WORKERS Righteous Babe Records

Funk-Punk high priestess and old-school folky, songster, and story teller— eighteen songs and stories about workers and struggles in the history of American labor —recorded live in a cozy studio/mansion in front of a selected audience. There are a lot of daring things

reviews

going on with this CD and how they play out with listening audiences will be interesting, to say the least. Ani continues to define herself any way she damn well pleases and brings a breath of fresh air to the sometimes ridiculous music industry. Her label puts out music that just don't cut it with the money folks in the know and without someone like her a release like this would never get made. Yeah, Utah has a bunch of stuff out on Red House and Interscope, but would those wonderful labels put out a bastardized hybrid like **Fellow Workers?** This CD is no joke. The labor movement is currently poised to reclaim America from big money, special interests, and a jaded, self-centered "elected" leadership. The liner note intro is written by Howard Zinn, author of the wonderful *A People's History of the United States* and a labor activist. He's a member of the National Writers Union, which is a part of the UAW. (This brings me some personal pride as I am a member of the UAW and am much pleased to be associated with Zinn and all of my fellow brothers and sisters in the Union.) Ani belongs to two musician's unions as well as the Screen Actors Guild and Utah has been an IWW Wobbly for nearly half a century. These are people that believe in justice and put themselves in a position to be accountable for what they stand for. This brings a special energy and idealism to **Fellow Workers.**

Utah takes the main vocals on these eighteen tracks, telling stories and singing over the music made by Ani's band. There are some traditional worker's songs like "The Internationale," "Joe Hill," "Pie in the Sky," and "Dump the Bosses." There are Utah's stories about his life and famous worker activists; "The Most Dangerous Woman," "Bread and Roses," "I Will Not Obey," "Direct Action," and "Shoot or Stab Them" stand out as powerful entertainment/education and are lent a modern twist with the funk grooves behind them. In addition, Dave Pirner, lead singer of Soul Asylum, plays a sweet and longing trumpet on "The Long Memory."

What it basically comes down to, however, is whether the CD is good or not. It is. The music is great, Utah is fun and exciting, the live crowd adds many dimensions to the overall product, and good tunes are good tunes. If it also happens to be somewhat important as a socio-political document, then all the better.

- Duke Aaron
II Duce



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m u s i c



JOE HENRY *FUSE* Mammoth Records

A month or two ago my wife, Cookie, came home from a show at a local club (guess who owns it) and started raving about the opening act. Joe somebody-or-another. Well, it was Joe Henry and his latest CD, *Fuse*, justifies the first half-hour of drunken babble I had to sit through that night. His unique style, kind of a cross-breed of Mark Eitzel and Vic Chestnut makes this laid-back, sleeper of a disc jump out and scream at you - despite itself. Forgetting about the great photo-montage included in the liner notes (Joe with a monkey, on a table, crying over spilt milk, as well as some pictures of his creepy doll-thing and a cool shot of the monkey solo), there are eleven suped-up, laid-down tracks that show a young songwriter doing great stuff, while barely starting to spread his wings. *Fuse* and its large and varied cast of musicians puts some safe distance between Joe Henry as an artist and the inept title of singer-songwriter. Thank Gawd. There is even an appearance by the Dirty Dozen Brass Band and (try not to hold it against poor Joe) the horrible, over-praised Jakob Dylan.

Unlike most recordings that feature a variety of line-ups that change with the songs, there is a unifying overall sound to *Fuse*. Self-produced, Henry has to get the credit for achieving what he did, but it should be noted that he had some help from the great T-Bone Burnett and that don't hurt none. There are really only ten songs, the eleventh I'll leave as mystery, but they all show case a really talented songwriter and an even more talented lyricist. The line from "Great Lake" — "I've been still, you wretched little freak, give us room to move! Give us milk, you little pig, we'll tell you when we're through" — just sort of stands out

for me, you know? Mammoth Records seems to be betting on "Skin & Teeth" and the first cut, "Monkey," but some of the deeper tracks are even better. "Like She Was A Hammer" gets my vote for best song on the disc, followed closely by the title track. The production throughout is superb and lushness abounds. There are a multitude of instruments used on varying tracks (just what is a Fun Machine?), but the music and lyrics never overwhelm one another. After perusing the tiny print of the liner notes for a while, I noticed that Henry gives "special thanks to Vic Chestnut for a kick in the pants when I needed one." This is clear vindication for me. I'm not as big of a music idiot as some would say. If you like Eitzel, or the incomparable Vic Chestnut, or even a farther-a-field songwriter like Tom Waits, this is something you can't miss getting. If you hate them all, well, *Fuse* might just bridge the gap into your own musically delusional world anyway. You can get info on this or other Mammoth releases at www.mammoth.com.

- Duke Aaron
Il Duce



(LIES, SISSIES, AND FIASCOS) THE BEST OF THIS AMERICAN LIFE Rhino Records

Producer Ira Glass calls *This American Life* "basically like *Car Talk*." Except it has only one guy and no cars. Part documentary and part fiction, it's really just a bunch of stories, but you really have to listen to it yourself to understand why anyone would listen to it at all. It's just the best thing on radio and it's even better on CD because you can listen to it whenever (perhaps on that really long car ride).

This double-CD contains more

than two hours of classic *This American Life* stories first heard on public radio stations across the nation (locally on WFCR). Part I, "We Laughed," consists of six humorous stories including David Sedaris' "Drama Bug" and Sarah Vowell's "Shooting Dad." The other four stories will have you rolling in the floor, but there's nothing funnier than David Sedaris. Except Sarah Vowell. Picture her loading her father's ashes into a cannon—at his request. Part II is "We Wept." These five stories are equally good, but they look at the more poignant side of life. The best is Ira Glass' "Get Over It!", a situation familiar to us all as we go back to just being friends. Buy this CD set. Better yet, join WFCR and get it as a premium next pledge week and benefit yourself, public radio, and *This American Life*.

Note: this CD will be available as a premium during WFCR's Fund Drive, November 4-10 on 88.5FM.
- Kyle Cohen



OYSTERBAND HERE I STAND Omnium

Originally calling themselves The Whitestable Oyster Company Ceilidh Band, this highly accomplished group has been around in one form or another since 1975. Fans of traditional Celtic and English folk music's transition to high energy rock n' roll are, most likely, already familiar with Oysterband. Neophytes will surely be won over in short order with this release. A most rollicking outing, this album once again proves that sophistication doesn't necessarily preclude primal dance music. This is their strong suit, and the years of honing their craft at dancehalls and festivals all over the place have placed them at the pinnacle of their art.

While they're not quite as raw

reviews

as they once were, the band has lost none of their spunk. There are some rip-roaring numbers here, and the opener, "On the Edge," is a perfect example. From the misleadingly soothing mandolin/fiddle intro, it shortly develops quite a punch with scathing guitar and superb singing. Next up to the plate is the moving "This Is The Voice," with heavenly harmonies from guests Chumbawamba, and striking concertina accompaniment. "In Your Eyes" is a rocking reel with whirling hypnotic guitars that really make you want to move. The poignant lament "A Time Of Her Own" is one of the few slower numbers, and is a real "have a cry in your beer" type of song.

Lead singer John Jones has the perfect voice for this material, as well as playing melodeon (a sort of "working-man's organ") with great aplomb. Ian Telfer's spellbinding fiddle transfixes the listener throughout, and the megalithic rhythm section of Chopper and Lee anchor even the most capricious tunes effortlessly. Rounding out the unit is multi-instrumentalist Alan Prosser. On "After Rain" and the rousing "This Town," the lads are ably assisted by Great Big Sea (who have a fine recent album of their own). Wild Slim Mustapha also joins the roster on bazouki, played in his imitable style. The disc is splendidly co-produced with Alaric Neville, who also sits in on a half dozen instruments.

These guys just seem to get better and better with each album, and they keep crankin' them out too. There is also a double hits collection called **Pearls From Oysters** with two hours of their very best. **Here I Stand** will surely go down as one of their finest.

(Omnium, POB 7367, Minneapolis, MN 55407 / www.oysterband.co.uk. To receive Oysterband's free newsletter *The F-Word*: POB 6914 London N18WP England.)

- Meathook Williams

HAMZA EL DIN A WISH Sounds True

Listening to the music of Hamza El Din, you feel yourself transported back in time. Way back in time. His sound is ageless, yet his recordings always seem fresh, **A Wish** being no exception. This time around El Din adds a few more musicians to the lineup, evolving his artistry further still. His new label, Sounds True, more than lives up to its name, furnishing a truly riveting recording.

1964 proved to be a watershed

year (literally) for Hamza El Din. First, as a result of the Aswan Dam project, his hometown was totally submerged and its inhabitants sent packing. As a result, he set out to inform the world of their plight, championing their fascinating culture, and going so far as to be noticed by then-U.N. Secretary U.Thant, who arranged for a keynote slot at the Human Rights Day concert. Also that year, he was invited to play the Newport Folk Festival and released his first record on Vanguard, **Music Of Nubia**. I still have my copy which I bought about four years later, and I listen to its still haunting beauty quite often (it's available on CD now, of course). Through the years he's remained active in human rights as well as in ethnic music, on which he lectures worldwide. Thanks to the effort of the Grateful Dead's Micky Hart, El Din has released some wonderful music on the Ryko label fairly recently, and Nonesuch has had him on their roster as well. But this new disc is a breakthrough as far as sonics go.

More immediate and warm sounding, his highly individual fingerpicking style glistens and his reassuring voice cuts into your very soul. The title track features W.A. Mathieu's piano, surprisingly not sounding a whit out of place, and the always alluring cello of Kronos Quartet's Jean Jeanrenaud (Kronos recorded Hamza's "Escalay" a few years back on their well received **Pieces Of Africa**). Shizuru Ohtaka's voice is positively angelic on "Greetings," which also spotlights ace percussionist Hani Naser, who many of you are familiar with as the sole backing musician on David Lindley's groundbreaking live CDs. Amy Cyr shines as well on nay (that part of the world's answer to the flute). In addition to oud, Hamza plays tar and other drums. Handclapping is also a feature on his recordings, lending a distinctive flavor. But it's the genius of his oud playing, his choice of material (much of it self-composed), and his dusky vocals that have charmed audiences everywhere for decades. All are at their zenith here. The songs tell of Nubia, then and now, and are sung in a language professed not to have changed much from the time of Ramses II.

One of the true giants of the world stage, Hamza El Din has once again

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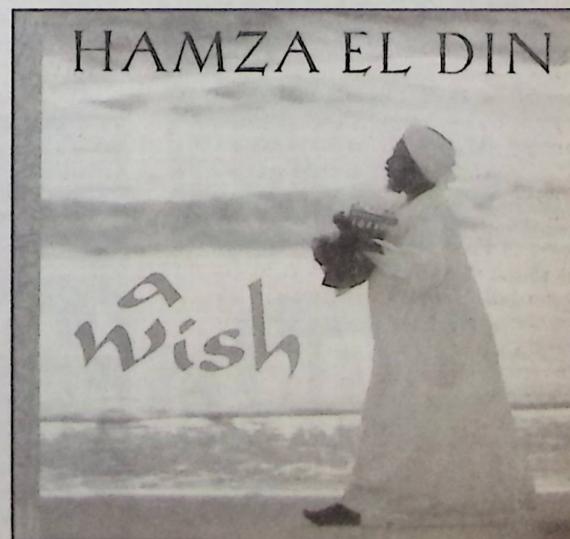
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- Meathook Williams



MUSIC



END OF SUMMER SOUNDTRACK SMORGASBORD

**NEVER BEEN KISSED
DESERT BLUE
SUMMER OF SAM
AMERICAN PIE**

I am in severe shock. SEPTEMBER ALREADY? Where did the summer go? Doesn't it seem like just moments ago you were reading our June/July issue, devouring the "Summer Soundtrack Smorgasbord?" To ease the transition back to school, work, or wherever the fall takes you, here is an offering of recent soundtrack releases.

The Never Been Kissed soundtrack (Capitol) is 50/50. Eight of the songs you won't be able to tell apart. The rest however, provide an enjoyable (and diverse) listening experience. The first to surpass the pack of sound-alikes is the disc's opener, "Never You Mind" by Semisonic. Great song, great band, period. "Erase/Rewind" from the Cardigan's has a smooth, whimsy groove to it. REM fans will be interested to know they contributed "At My Most Beautiful." "Candy in the Sun" by Swirl 360 was the song in the Never Been Kissed trailers. It's a good mixture of pop and electronic dance music. Lose your Hanson CD? No problem! Sounding alike to the point it's actually creepy are the Moffats with "Until You Loved Me." The Smiths slow it down a little with "Please, Please Please Let Me Get What I Want."

Your Best Bet: Remember the scene where a stoned Josie (Drew Barrymore) danced at the club? "Cumbia De Los Muertos" by Ozomatli was her song. Smack the bongos and your ass in time just like Josie, my friend! Also try "A Girl Named Happiness (Never Been Kissed)" from Jeremy Jordan. Jeremy you'll remember from the early '90s — a solo Backstreet Boy of sorts. He's all grown up now and his music has too.

From an indie film I have a feeling we Valley folk won't get to see until

video comes the **Desert Blue** soundtrack (Razor and Tie). "Lonely Lola Cherry Cola Girl" (say that 3 times fast) by Bic Runga is a cautionary tale to the poster girl for a soda company. "Nothin'" from VDog and The Funny Bone would be 100% better if VDog didn't sound like he was singing into a voice transmitter. The static crackle is unnecessary. Aussie Ben Lee's "Sleepwalking" is fittingly dreamy and hypnotic, as is The Candykins' "Death of a Minor TV Celebrity." The peppiest song on the album is, ironically, Janis Ian's "Sweet Misery," and the one with the hardest edge is "Break It Up" from Rocket From the Crypt. Also notable are the combined efforts of Nina Persson and Nathan Larson, from the Cardigans and Shudder to Think respectively, on their song "What the Hell Are You Cryin' For?"

Your Best Bet: The dangerously catchy and infectious "The Frug" from newcomers Rilo Kiley.

Seeing how **Summer of Sam** takes place in '77, the soundtrack (Hollywood) is strictly disco; some good ("Best of My Love" by the Emotions, "Don't Leave Me This Way" from Thelma Houston) some not (ABBA's "Dancing Queen.") If you're really into the Studio 54 scene, pick this disc up. Otherwise, watch the movie and get your disco fill from the shortened songs in the films' background.

Third Eye Blind and the unmistakably odd (yet pleasing) voice of Stephan Jenkins open the **American Pie** soundtrack (Universal) with "New Girl." As described in the press release, "radio fixtures" Tonic contribute the album's first single, "You Wanted More." Tonic is actually a great band that suffers from radio-play overkill, hence turning legions

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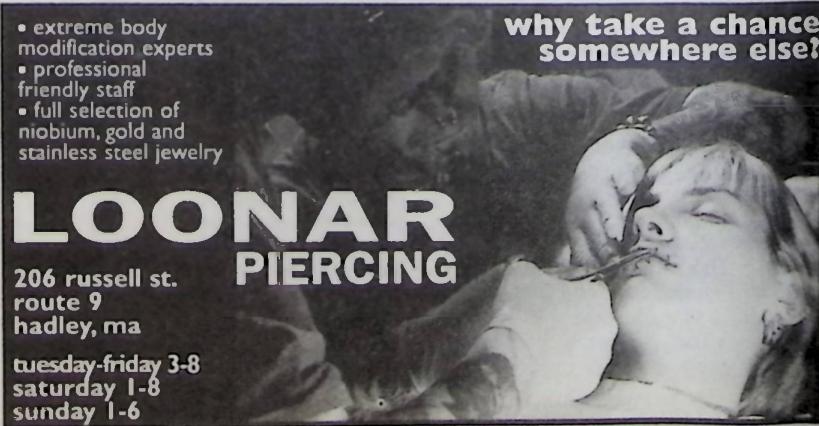
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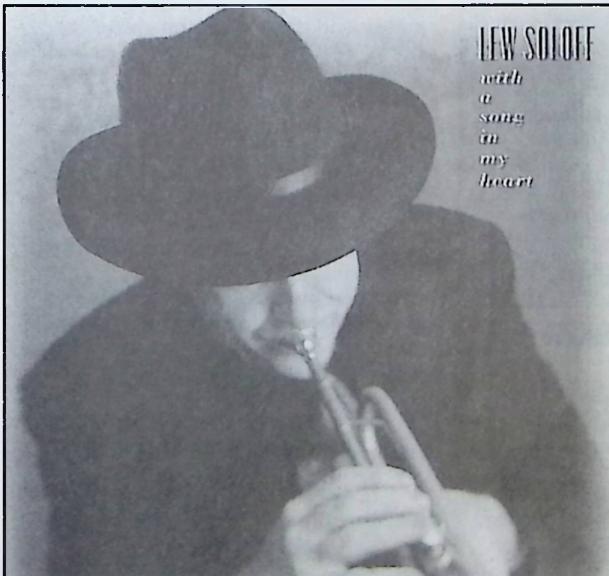
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27

of fans (including me) temporarily against them with the "If I Hear That Song One More Time I'm Going To Axe The Radio" state of mind. The boys of Blink 182 and Sugar Ray rock through "Mutt" and "Glory" respectively. "Stranger By The Day" from Shades Apart is packed with clever irony-filled, oxymoronic lyrics.

Your Best Bet: Bic Runga, who you'll remember from the *Desert Blue* soundtrack. Her duet with Dan Wilson of Semisonic, "Good Morning Baby," pours out of the speakers in sweet, gentle ripples of song. "Sway," her other song, is the softest on the album, and ties for *American Pie*'s best song along with "Good Morning Baby."

As summer draws to a close, so must I...
- Aundria Theocles



**LEW SOLOFF
WITH A SONG
IN MY HEART**
Milestone

Lew Soloff has been a working musician for well over thirty years. The first time I saw him play (1969), he was with Blood, Sweat & Tears. Most recently I saw him with the Carnegie Hall Jazz Orchestra with his one-time collaborator John Faddis. He has also accompanied Frank Sinatra, Maynard Ferguson, Carla Bley, and worked with the Gil Evans Big Band. The son of Vaudeville performers, he was classically trained and started his career playing with Latin bands including Machito and Tito Puente. He then began his association with B, S & T and Gil Evans and also found time to be the featured soloist on several classical pieces. Lew explains, "It's very difficult to make a living just in the jazz world. I still do job-type jobs because I have a family to support. Coming up, I just wanted to have the horn on my face." With his tremendous resume, it is surprising to note that this is his solo debut for an American label.

Accompanying Soloff on *With a Song In My Heart* is pianist Mulgrew Miller, drummer Victor Lewis, and the extraordinary bassist George Mraz. Mraz has traveled a



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similar path to Soloff's. Both were born in 1944, Lew in New Jersey, George in Prague. They played together in the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis band and are known as masters at their instruments. Mraz' bass lines are intricate and his timekeeping is rock solid, yet he is oh-so subtle. His solo on the opening track "Come Rain or Come Shine" is a gem. Lew's wife Emily Mitchell plays harp on two cuts.

Soloff, a master on the plunger mute and a dazzling high-note trumpeter, takes a different spin on *With A Song In My Heart* and performs the entire set with a Harmon mute. The program includes two originals; "One For Emily," a lovely ballad dedicated to Lew's wife, and "Istanbul," a mesmerizing Near Eastern modal piece which features hypnotic drum work from Victor Lewis. Both "Istanbul" and the preceding track "Deguello" pay tribute to Miles Davis and Gil Evans with whom both trumpeters spent a great deal of time. "Mea Culpa," played at a leisurely pace, also shows Soloffs appreciation of Miles as he utilizes the lower range of the horn and finds the spare and lonely territory of the master and infuses it with his own rich brassy tone. Mraz once again shines with an evocative harmonic solo.

The standards "The Way You Look Tonight" and "With a Song In My Heart" benefit from the burnished, nearly vibrato-less horn of Soloff, as well as Mulgrew Miller's complex solos and sense of swing. Lew's passionate interpretation of Sinatra's "I'm a Fool to Want You" is the emotional

high point. Perhaps the most surprising selection is Soloff's rendition of the second movement of Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 4.

The ensemble interaction on the CD is wonderful. The only beef is with the concept of using only the harmon mute — it is performed beautifully, but with all his "chops," I would like to hear more.

- Bud Callahan



BELA FLECK THE BLUEGRASS SESSIONS Warner Bros.

This disc is actually volume two of *Tales From The Acoustic Planet*, and moves along in the same direction.

Fleck is, of course, best known for taking the banjo to unheard-of reaches with his Flecktones. Astounding as that band has been over the years, I still prefer his bluegrass recordings. And, track for track (18 of 'em), this one's as good as it gets.

For starters, it's hard to imagine anything less with this bluegrass "supergroup" that he's brought together. With Tony Rice on guitar, Jerry Douglas playing his trademark liquid dobro, Sam Bush on mandolin, fiddler Stuart Duncan, and Mark Shatz thumping the ol' bass fiddle, they really swing. The material, more than half of it penned by Fleck, is high caliber and the production above the norm. The inclusion of several polkas jazzes up the playlist nicely (even my favorite, "Clarinet Polka," makes an appearance). On these cuts, the band is joined by tuba, drums, and accordion, filling out the sound a bit without sounding too bizarre. Most of the songs are instrumentals, but those with vocals have some heavy hitters like Vince Gill, Tim O'Brian, and Ricky Skaggs guesting. Best of all, bluegrass icons Earl Scruggs and Vassar Clements turn up, respectively on banjo and fiddle. These two go back to the birth of the genre, and are still a pleasure to behold.

"Always leave 'em wantin' more," it's often been said, and I'm just about ready for volume three.

Note: they're putting together a tour soon.

- Meathook Williams

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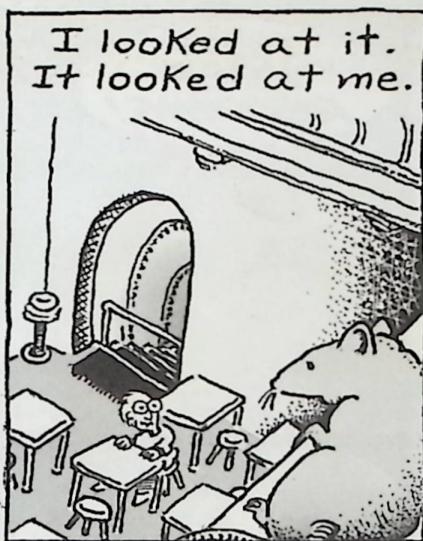
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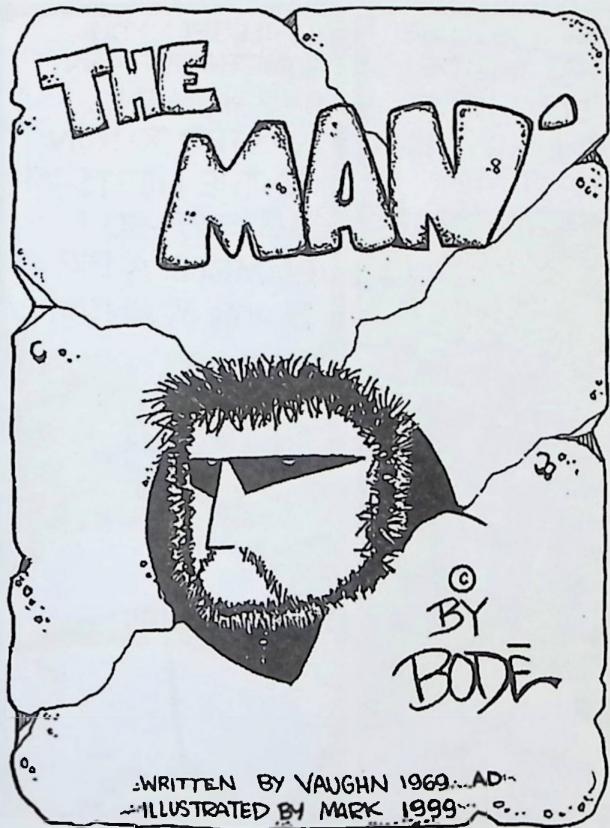
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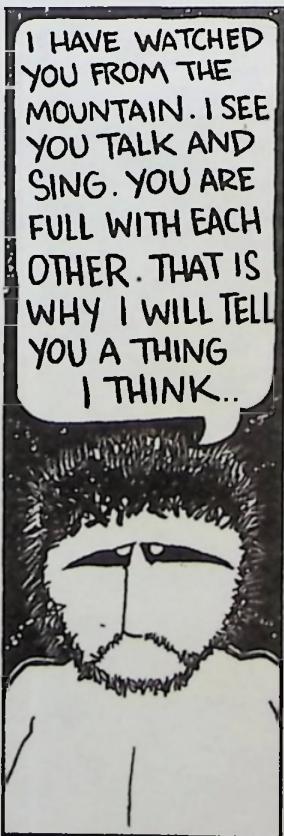
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DO YOU KNOW
WHAT THEY SAY
WHEN THEY
SING?....



THE LIGHTS SAY
COME MAN, WALK
RUN UP TO US
YOU ARE LONELY
WE ARE LONELY
WALK, RUN UP
TO US AND WE
WILL TOUCH EACH
OTHER AND NOT
BE LONELY!!



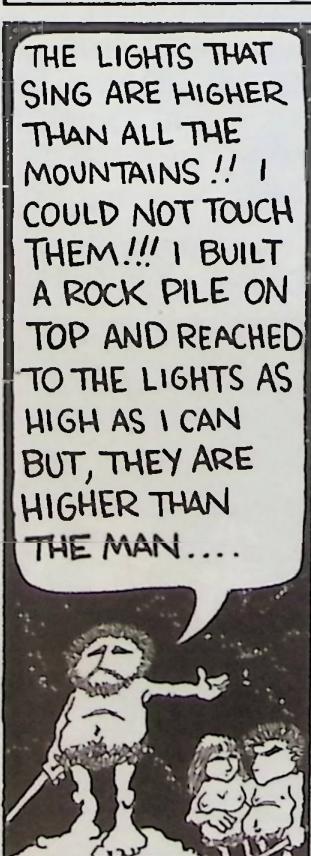
CAN YOU HEAR
THAT INSIDE?
I DO. I HEAR
IT EVERY NIGHT
TIME...



I WILL TELL YOU
SOMETHING MAN
AND WOMAN... I
WANTED TO RUN
TO THE LIGHTS IN
THE SKY, SO I
CLIMBED A BIG
BLACK MOUNTAIN.



THE LIGHTS THAT
SING ARE HIGHER
THAN ALL THE
MOUNTAINS!!! I
COULD NOT TOUCH
THEM!!! I BUILT
A ROCK PILE ON
TOP AND REACHED
TO THE LIGHTS AS
HIGH AS I CAN
BUT, THEY ARE
HIGHER THAN
THE MAN....



AND SO I THINK
I WILL NOT GO
TO THE LIGHTS
WHEN THEY SING
TO ME. I WILL
SIT ON A ROCK
AND WATCH
THEM...



I THINK...



I THINK THE MAN
WILL GO TO THE
LIGHTS IN THE SKY
NOT THIS MAN AND
NOT YOU WOMAN AND
NOT ANY MAN OR
WOMAN THAT WALKS.



I THINK A MAN
WILL GO THAT IS
NOT WALKING
YET... HE WILL
BE FROM YOU
WOMAN, AND HE
WILL HEAR THE
SONG...

DO YOU KNOW
THAT IS THE
MANS PLACE,
THAT IS WHERE
ALL MAN MUST
GO.

GO AWAY MAN!
YOU TALK FUNNY
TALK!! GO AWAY
OR I'LL STICK YOU!

GO AWAY!
I WILL STICK
YOU!!

BUT I
HAVE TO
TELL YOU..

THE MAN AND
WOMAN DO NOT
HEAR ME...
I WILL GO AWAY
AND LISTEN TO
THE LONELY
LIGHTS IN
THE SKY...

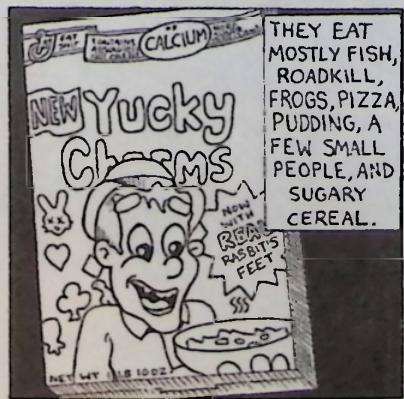
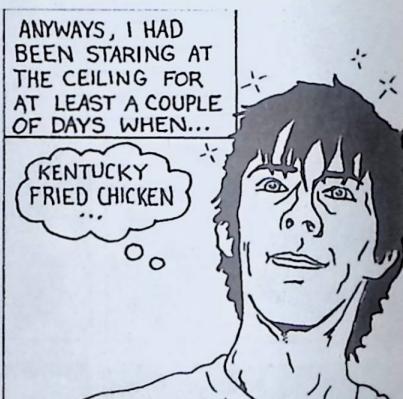
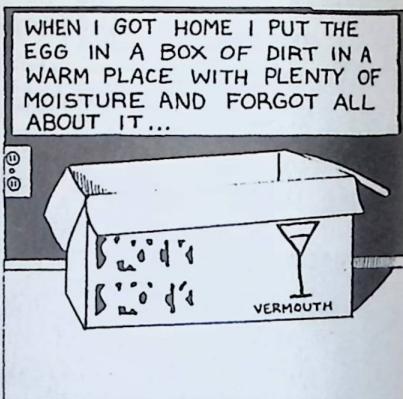
I KNOW A MAN
WILL WALK WHO
WILL TOUCH THEM...

DAUGHIN
IE MARIL
BATE
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**BERTINE
MORBID
LATENIGHT SHOW
Nettwerk**

Debut album from Norwegian singer/tv host/martial artist Bertine Zetlitz (um, Oslo's Jill-of-all-trades?), she of the glacial ice field eyes. A mix of electronic and disco dance music, softened with flourishes of sixties pop and jazzy/funky breaks, and covered in creamy vocals (don't worry; they're in English).

**BOWS
BLUSH
Too Pure**



Debut album from Norwegian singer/tv host/martial artist Bertine Zetlitz (um, Oslo's Jill-of-all-trades?), she of the glacial ice field eyes. A mix of electronic and disco dance music, softened with flourishes of sixties pop and jazzy/funky breaks, and covered in creamy vocals (don't worry; they're in English).

Brainchild of Luke Sutherland, formerly of Long Fin Killie, and featuring the vocals of Danish singer Signe Hoirup Wille-Jorgensen (of Speaker Bite Me). Brass and strings float over and often over-power the slightly different-than-the-norm (this is a good thing) drum and bass. Singer Signe's voice is dreamy and druggy and all things sultry.

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Jennifer Lopez, Latina actress who kicked ass in one of last year's best flicks, *Out Of Sight*, turns (churns?) out a debut album that is, predictably, over-produced yet still infectious, full of flamenco ballads and string- and chorus-filled dance cuts. Love gained, love lost, lovely photos of Ms. Lopez frolicking at the beach.

Singer-songwriter Julia Darling has been hype-heralded with comparisons to Kate Bush. Unwarranted; no comparison, and no need for comparison: Darling has a style both unique and evocative.

Singer-songwriter Julia Darling has been hype-heralded with comparisons to Kate Bush. Unwarranted; no comparison, and no need for comparison: Darling has a style both unique and evocative.

A good disc to have, especially if you thought Bjork's debut was overly disco (I do) and Bjork's latest was too "experimental" (I don't). "Color Me," with its deep-ocean bass, is the stand-out cut. Well-crafted; pleasant, if a tad predictable, but holds a few nice surprises.

A must-buy if you're into the post-Bjork world of (I hate to use this word in this context but...) "intelligent" electronica; that is, of music that is sonically enticing without being cold.

Hmm. This isn't necessarily a *bad* album but it isn't really a *good* album, either. The kinda tunes you're apt to hear piped-in at Marshall's or Caldor's (RIP).

This is a good, solid album, one that continues to grow on me with repeated playings. Great lyrics and vocals (delivered in a sometimes quivering yet always self-assured manner), wonderful instrumentation (from loud/soft guitar to swirly background keyboards and ghostly samplings) and, well, very catchy tunes.

KARI WUHRER SHINY Del-Fi Records

Fanboys and girls ought to recognize Kari from the Sci-Fi Channel series *Sliders*, or from B-flicks such as *Thinner* and *Anaconda*. The jacket art features more than a, well, handful, of photos of Kari and her nicely augmented cleavage, but is she worthy of a disc? Surprisingly, yes... if you like very 70s-ish rock that at times, strangely, evokes *Ziggy*-era Bowie with its song structures and Ronson-like chops, while at other times folds in hip-hop beats and folksy fingerings. Quirky lyrics, too.



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ULTRA-LOUNGE: WILD, COOL & SWINGIN' VOL. 5 JULIE LONDON Capitol



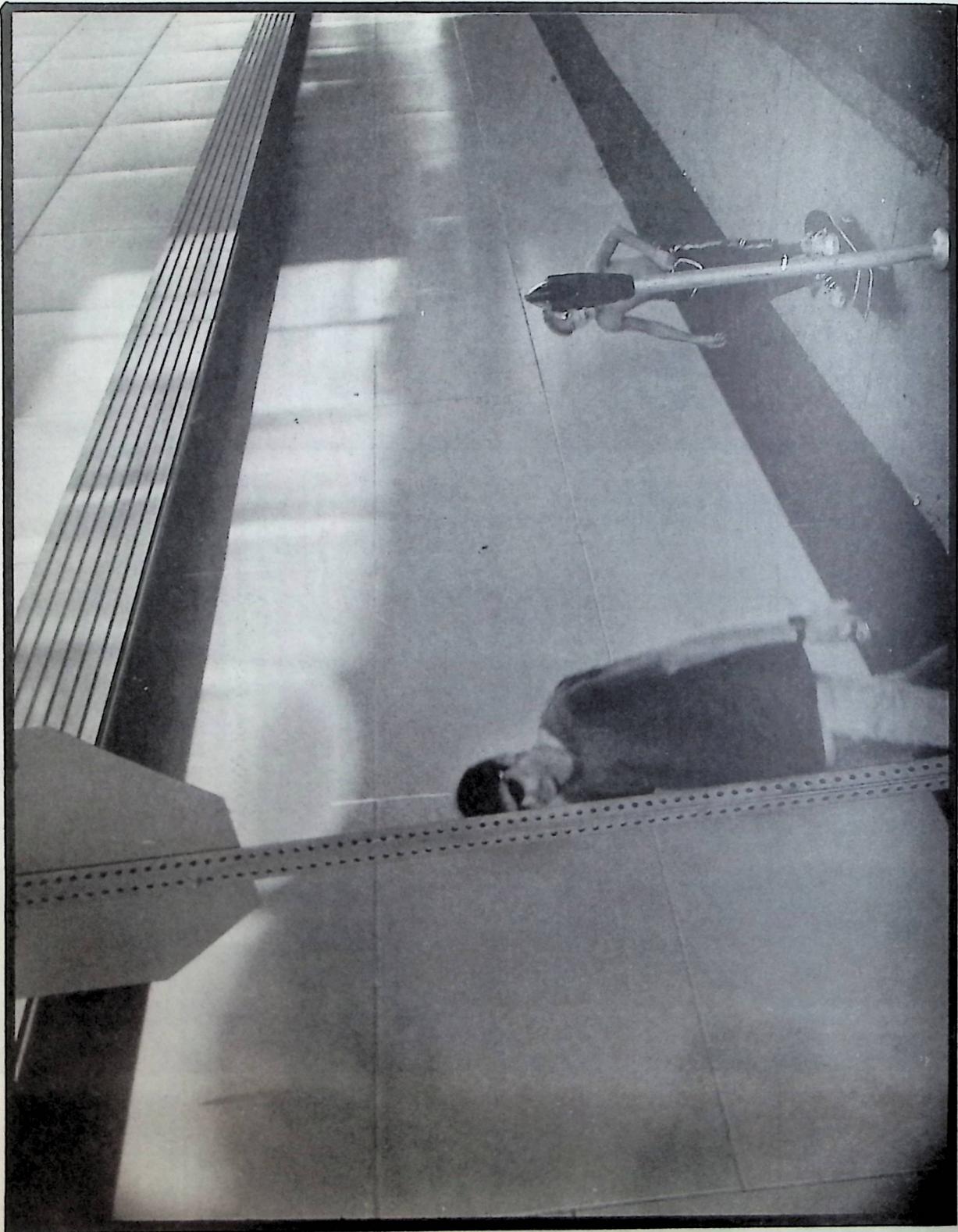
A very nice surprise. More than a guilty pleasure, less than a must-have. So... yes, buy it and hope that this isn't just an off-season dalliance on her part; me, I'd like to hear more.

Without a doubt, Cibo Matto is one of the best bands to emerge from the downtown NY scene in the past ten years. Shit, they're one of the best bands around today.

Again, without a doubt. Nice to have them back in the changer again.

Tough call. Impressive as it is, I'd almost recommend waiting to see what she does in the future, with a little less control, more carelessly, with some conviction, after she's had some true loss and knows what it's like to get really pissed off at some guy you thought was a good thing until he done you wrong.

This is yet another great compilation in Capitol's *Ultra Lounge* series (others have included Louis Prima and Wayne Newton) and the production is sharp and clear while still retaining most of that certain soft sound that only vinyl can produce.



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Wild View

**New on video
SEPTEMBER**

REVIEWED BY
S.R. BISSETTE

IDLE HANDS

Sick, reckless teen black comedy was essentially pulled from the box office, and it's sure to rattle unwary adults who stumble into the room in their post-Columbine haze. Its target audience, however, will find much to enjoy in this wise-ass send-up of slacker and splatter stereotypes. *Teenbeat* meat Devon Sawa (*CASPER*, *WILD*

AMERICA, etc.) savors his role's retread of Bruce Campbell's "possessed hand" slapschtick routines from *EVIL DEAD 2*. Seth Green delivers another amusing supporting character performance, and Vivica A. Fox is the fox at the heart of the beast. It isn't as funny as it wants to be, but there's a couple of howlers (undead Green's reason for not going "into the light" still cracks me up) and my teenagers ate it up, so what do I know? From Columbia.

TWIN DRAGONS

Jackie Chan stars as twin brothers separated as infants in this spry, comical contemporary kung-fu remake of *THE CORSICAN BROTHERS* from co-directors Tsui Hark and Ringo Lam. Great fun for Chan fans who've been waiting to see a decent version of this decade-old gem (prior video releases were washed-out and poorly-dubbed), and a much more entertaining intro to Jackie's charms than *MR. NICE GUY*. Once again, though, New Line has tampered with the original film for the Americanized version.

COOKIE'S FORTUNE

Lively Southern Gothic confection from veteran director Robert Altman (*M*A*S*H*, *NASHVILLE*, *THE PLAYER*, etc.) enlivens a pretty spare melodramatic comedy-of-ill-manners with a great ensemble cast (including Liv Tyler, Julianne Moore, Charles S. Dutton, Chris O'Donnell, Ned Beatty, and more). A rich widow's suicide leaves grieving friends dealing with havoc caused by greedy relatives scrabbling for the fortune by making it look like the old belle was murdered. Glenn Close is in especially fine form as the greediest of the lot. Lesser Altman, but rewarding fun for discriminating viewers. From USA.



Deservedly one of the surprise box office smashes of the year, this ingenious science-fiction tale of illusory life in the virtual lane (under the dominion of the nastiest non-human entities in recent cinematic memory) calculatedly pulls the rug out from under the viewer's feet every chance it gets. In the end, the kinetic melange of recreational/survivalist drug use and abuse, dystopian sf concepts, Hong Kong martial-arts films, Lewis Carroll references, and drop-dead action sequences works up quite a head of steam and coalesces into one of the decade's best sf epics. Pop cultural cross-references abound, but "comics-and-comix-illiterate critics completely missed the considerable debt due to Last Gasp's venerable *SLOW DEATH* comix of the early 1970's (particularly Richard Corben's classic "How Howie Made It In The Real World" and Charles Dallas' "The Book of Zee"), and the fact that this is essentially a super-hero movie. In fact, it's the best super-hero movie ever made, period. Highly recommended. Warner Brothers.

RAVENOUS

A discredited soldier (Guy Pearce of *L.A. CONFIDENTIAL* and *PRISCILLA, QUEEN OF THE DESERT*) is exiled to a remote military compound in the wintry mountains of the Northwest, where an encounter with a crazed cannibal (Robert Carlyle of *TRAINSPOTTING*, *THE FULL MONTY*) awakens his own latent blood lust and sparks a campaign of terror. Not for all tastes, and definitely not for the squeamish, but indulgent viewers will find much to savor in this unusual tale that draws from accounts of the Donner Party and Alfred Packer, and slyly incorporates many primal folklore demons, including lycanthropy, vampires (note Carlyle's startling evocation of the real Vlad the Impaler), and the wendigo. The participation of a top-drawer cast and renowned alternative director Antonia Bird (*PRIEST*) only added to the woes of 20th Century Fox's marketing department when they took on the task of selling this decidedly odd, gore-drenched horror-western curio to the public. No surprise it stiffed at the box office. From Fox.

YELLOW SUBMARINE

Long out of print and deserving of being remastered and re-released, this is the premiere psychedelic-era cartoon feature of the 1960's that proved Disney could be usurped — all you need is love! Nonsensically gorgeous and eye-popping as ever, peppered (as is Pepperland) with plenty of Beatles songs and the animated Fab Foursome themselves (who, sadly, did not provide the voice performances, though they do make a live-action cameo appearance at the end). Best of all are the Blue Meanies ("Bring me my GLOVE!") and Heinz Edelman's incredible design work throughout. This sell-through version also sports delectable extras, including the song cut from the film ("Hey, Bulldog") and a cool but too-short documentary about the making of the film. From MGM/UA; also on DVD.

HENRY ROLLINS: You Saw Me Up There

It is not often that I can keep quiet for more than a couple minutes. But not once in the 83-minute length of Henry Rollins' newest video, *You Saw Me Up There*, did I utter a word. Not one gripe, smart-ass remark, or beverage request. I did, however, laugh 'til I hurt.

The first part of his life that Henry shares is his experiences buying a New York apartment, and becoming "New York-atized." His first obstacle was realizing that the "furnished" apartment was not furnished at all, thus he had go buy a plethora of kitchenware items, much to his dismay. "No real rock and roll animal goes and buys a hand towel!" he yells. Some of his other problems with the new pad were a heating pipe "that burned with the intensity of Hell," paper-thin walls and snoring neighbors, construction workers who think they can sing, a too-high sink, and having to commit mass roachicide.

Thanks to the second story on the video, the term "Eric's not a pilot!"... has become a euphemism between my circle of friends and I for any situation that has gone from bad to worse. Henry discusses the trials of trying to get to a gig in Tulsa, OK on time, and having to resort to being flown there by what he and his manager *think* is a private plane service. Eric, the "pilot" of the single-engine craft, turns out to be much less than everyone expected. And the fact that it's a single engine plane with "golf-cart" doors does nothing to assuage Hank's fears about falling out of the sky. "You do not want to hear a guy in a cover band who's flying you in a canoe with a lawnmower sized engine saying 'Uh-oh,'" Henry says, after Eric mutters those exact words. After landing to refuel at an empty airstrip in Grove, Oklahoma, Henry launches into what he believes Eric is trying to do—murder him and take his place in the Rollins Band. When Eric's true identity is found out minutes later, the pseudo-murder plot doesn't seem too far-fetched to Henry anymore. He then must wait at the local gas station to be picked up for the gig, all the while being hassled by the cops ("Have you ever seen *Deliverance*?" someone asks him) and later identified and surrounded by the "alterna teens" of Grove.

Henry's next story, about a show in Brazil with the bizarre combination of the Rollins Band, Evan Dando, and Mr. Big, is one of my favorites from his repertoire. After working himself into a "lathered frenzy," Henry knocked himself

out by slamming his knee into his forehead only seconds after walking out on stage. By slowing down the thought process after the initial blow, he takes us through his hilarious return to consciousness. When he realizes his head is profusely bleeding, he again launches into a rant that illustrates his self-described "infantile, twisted, Darwinian" mind. "I think that beautiful Brazilian women are gonna see a guy bathed in white light, gunning through hundred's of dB's of awesome rock power: they see tattoos, they see muscle, they see blood; and they realize — this is the guy they must get the seed from. And I imagine waves of beautiful clamoring Brazilian women crawling over other people to get to me." The story ends with his wry admittance, "I did not meet (one) Brazilian woman in three days."

The remainder of *You Saw Me Up There* involves Henry discussing his views on homophobia and racism, as well as a report of the time he played shows with his boyhood idol Ozzy Osbourne. He gushes like the Ozzy fanboy he is at heart, all the while showcasing his master storytelling abilities. - Aundria Theocles



Whoops.
Weren't you supposed to read
Moby Dick and Lord of the Flies
over the summer?

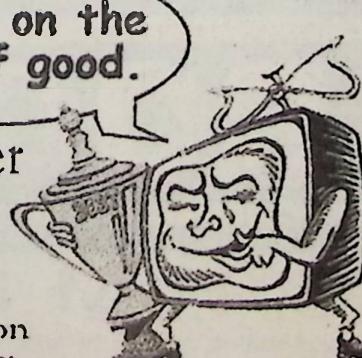
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THE CELEBRATION

It's Bergman-esque psychodrama time. Thomas Vinterberg of the Danish filmmaking collective is committed to authenticity: handheld camerawork; no special lighting or props; careful editing and imaginative angles. Family members gather to celebrate a pater familias's 60th birthday. The story is gripping and well told, but just another in the series of bleak, dysfunctional family exposés that seem to be in vogue these days.

- Brooks Robards

DOWN IN THE DELTA

Poet Maya Angelou directs Alfre Woodard, Wesley Snipes and Esther Rolles. Woodard plays a city girl with two kids — a son Thomas, and an autistic daughter. They head south to live in the country with relatives.

Though a little heavy-handed with symbolism, the movie is a compelling story of the importance of African-American family history grounded in slavery.

- Brooks Robards

THE NAKED MAN

Don't be fooled by the ballyhoo playing up Ethan Coen's creative role in this mess. And it IS a mess. Ethan only co-wrote the screenplay; the film itself was co-authored and solo-directed by J. Todd Anderson, marginalizing Coen's effort. And don't forget that

while the Coen Brothers have carved a unique niche for their own idiosyncratic brand of bizarro comedy, the charms of RAISING ARIZONA and THE BIG LEBOWSKI go hand-in-hand with the misfires of BARTON FINK and their association with Sam Raimi's sophomore debacle CRIMEWAVE (both films I happen to like, but they are misfires). THE NAKED MAN (no relation to Randy Newman's song) chronicles the maturation, mental collapse, and resurrection of one chiropractor extraordinaire named Ed (Michael Rapaport) who moonlights as "The Naked Man," a wrestler adorned in a "visible

man" leotard externalizing the internal organs of the human body. This contrived, off-kilter deadpan parody opens with a promising and engaging first act that loses its footing after the traumatic event that causes Ed to lose his mind and memory. It quickly degenerates into an increasingly unpleasant and unamusing mishmash of disparate elements (including a villainous mock-Elvis, bikers, a scheming paraplegic pharmaceutical-chain mogul, and a ludicrously graphic death-by-plane-propeller finale). Produced by Ben Barenholtz, one of the pioneers of the Midnight Movie phenomenon of the 1970's (including the release of David Lynch's ERASERHEAD), evidently still in search of cinematic oddities worthy of attention, but pedigree and good intentions do not a cult movie make.

- S. R. Bissette

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ROCKS

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SPAZMO!

I like to keep a little notebook on my coffee table, so I can jot down thoughts as I'm watching television, particularly when I'm watching videos. This week I went on a binge of sorts, watching videos back-to-back, and drowning a number of mood-altering liquids too make the ride a little less bumpy.

Sometimes I get a column idea out of these musings, but I went a little far with the chemical enhancements, so there's not much to string a whole column with, but enough to fill several fortune cookies. So, dear readers, in the tradition of a generation of burned-out sportswriters, I give you my **Annual Late-Summer Discharge of Aphorisms:**

—The waltz was invented to simulate sex, if only symbolically.

—Gershwin is God! *Rhapsody in Blue* is a nostalgic look back at the beginning of the century, sounding like a music box that speeds up and down as it's being cranked. Hate to tell you, kiddies: it ain't Clapton.

—Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf. do people realize it's a comedy? "Tell me about your wife's money" —the greatest line. Given my upbringing, Martha would

be the perfect woman for me.

—Jerry Falwell is a black hole of evil.

—Stanley Kubrick was a genius to cast this particular couple in *Eyes Wide Shut*. It's so cool he made them suffer so, keeping them trapped making this film for two years, keeping them from making millions on their standard cheesy Hollywood fare. What a master stroke in casting Tom Cruise, clearly a homosexual man, with his real-life beard, in this story of erotic jealousy. Kubrick knew what this story would bring out of his actors, bubbling all the conflict in this show marriage to the surface.

—Clinton is our slippery revenge for Reagan, the "Teflon president" who was allowed to continue committing his crimes with impunity.

—Old toilets are better.

—There are rock stars who should really be, and probably wanted to be, real estate agents. But they realized they had to be rock stars to make any real money. And 40-year-old real estate agents don't get to screw teenage girls.

—The closer you keep your holy books to the kitchen, the better it will go for you.

—That new version of *Charlie's Angels* on the Spanish language station is the coolest, because one of them is a sister. But Celia Cruz, this guest star, is one of the scariest looking people I've ever seen.

—Each day you do something that will prolong your life or something that will shorten it.

—We allow Mexico to exist so our own citizens can go there to perform illegal behavior. Otherwise, the invasion would begin. Same goes for Canada, until we run out of beaver pelts.

—Dario Argento is the last great film genius of our generation. *Phenomena* is worth the price of purchase alone for the sight of Jennifer Connelly vomiting copiously. No, not Phoebe Cates, Jennifer Connelly. Ponder that one for a moment.

—To unleash the power of the Universe, you must channel the ÜberShatner.



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DAVE BIEDERMAN

MEDIA D O G

Tony Long

the Valley's controversial radio talk-show host, was fired by Northampton-based WHMP on July 23. The station called it a "normal programming change," but Long feels he was canned because of a comment he made to the effect that if one encounters gay couples in a crosswalk, one should slow down to watch the show if they are women and speed up if they are men.

Long may be a homophobic pig but his program, which ran for three years prior to his abrupt departure, was an important source of local news. He invited as guests people from all ends of the political spectrum and tackled stories that the lily-livered local print media wouldn't touch. The public is the big

loser in the whole sorry episode. What follows is a discussion with Long about his sacking and the state of the media in the Pioneer Valley.

Publisher's note: *The following interview took place a week prior to my hiring Tony Long as an Advertising Account Executive and several days before Long announced his candidacy for Mayor of Northampton. The opinions expressed below are solely his own.*

MD: I read your piece in *Talker* magazine where you discussed the intimate relationship between radio and people's lives. Can you tell us about that?

TL: I remember as a kid being really connected to the FM jocks, like they were a part of my life. I don't have a connection with my local TV station but I have a connection with local radio. It's vocal, it's instant and it provides exactly what you're looking for.

MD: Does it influence people's outlooks and opinions? Is it important because everyone can participate?

TL: In talk radio, you become a part of the programs. My audience, whether they would call or be a guest on the show, all felt really connected to the show; they could relate to the conversations that were going on because they were about everyday issues.

MD: In the *Talker* piece you also discussed what you called the corporate rape of small-town local media and of

"management by muscle."

TL: I can speak from first-hand experience and I can tell you that the corporate management team from WHMP is the pinnacle of what is wrong with the radio industry. There is no stomach to do good programming. It's almost as if programming gets in the way of running commercials. They work out of Connecticut, New York and Springfield. There is no local presence and in fact there is no one really at the helm of WHMP. Their sales manager and program directors can't make any decisions. There is no station manager.

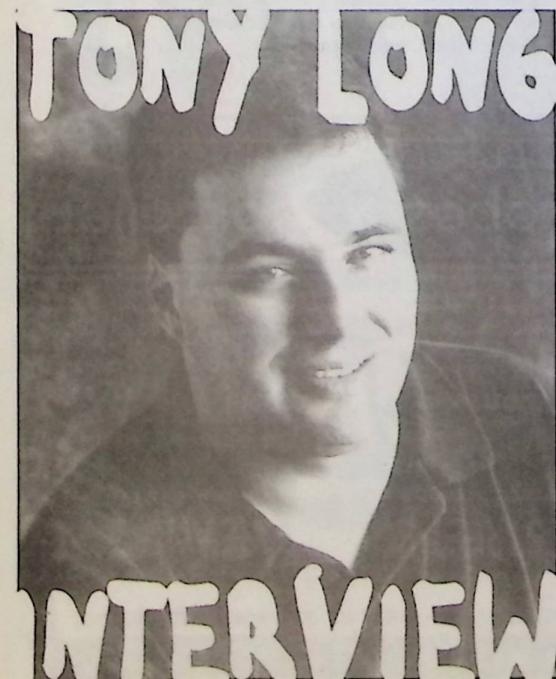
MD: No station manager? Who makes the programming decisions?

TL: Bill Hess. He is a regional program director who I don't think has ever even been to HMP. He used to be Dan Yorke's program director locally, then he got hired by a conglomerate and now he is out of New York. Here's how programming is done for HMP and I would imagine for many other radio stations. The local program director, Ted Baker, would one day get a phone call, for instance, from the marketing folks for the syndicated Mike Gallagher show. They would say, "Hi Ted, glad to be part of the station, how are things going, we hear you're running our show." Ted would say, "What are you talking about, we don't run the Mike Gallagher show." They would say, "We made a deal with Bill Hess about four weeks ago." People like (syndicated talk-show host) Judy Jarvis — her whole lifeline is Bill Hess. He dictates to radio stations that they run this, without any thought given to the format of that station, the audience, the market, none of it. Not only is Hess making decisions for local radio stations without any input from them, he is not even telling them about it. The local program director has no juice whatsoever. I think Ted Baker is one of the best program directors in the business. If he had the juice to call the shots HMP would be an awesome station. Bill Hess is just a plague on this business. He wants stuff that is non-offensive and easily canned.

MD: Isn't it the juicy stuff that pulls in listeners? Why did they pull the plug on you?

TL: Because it is a small market and they felt the pressure from a few big advertisers, particularly in lieu of the lesbian story. Jerry Hyland, the market manager, failed in his management skills when dealing with that whole gay issue. What he should have done was suspend me for a week which would have pacified the gay community because they felt the station had responded. I don't agree that I should have been suspended, but it would have taken care of the complaints, taken care of me and my audience and the whole thing would have been gone. Because he did nothing the pressure continued to build.

MD: What did you do to mitigate it? Did you apologize?



TL: Apologize for what? For offending people? Certain members of the gay community thought I was advocating violence towards gay men. My comment was sexist, slightly piggish locker room talk. But advocating violence? No.

MD: Did you discuss the corporate takeover of WHMP on your program, or the corporate takeover of the Advocate? It seemed like behind the scenes a lot was going on. How come you didn't address it on your show?

TL: I am just as much to blame for what is happening as everybody else because I never did address it. I was afraid of that team of managers. I knew I was on their radar anyway, because of the type of program that I did, so I never challenged them head on.

MD: That's a beautiful example of the chilling effect on the news of corporate takeovers. They may not give you a directive but you know what you're not supposed to discuss.

TL: Absolutely. And make no mistake, they would give directives as well. Jerry Hyland would come into the station, hear a news piece that he didn't like and go to the news director Ron Hall and tell him not to run it again.

MD: So you can probably expect more of the same chilling effect on the newly corporate Valley Advocate?

TL: Probably. There is no reason to believe that it wouldn't unless they show differently.

MD: What were you hoping to accomplish with your program?

TL: I wanted to produce a talk show that addressed valley issues, particularly Northampton, that addressed quality of life issues that people could relate to, that everybody could be involved in. I wanted it to be basic enough for everyone to understand. I didn't want to get into HMO issues, the Republican tax cuts; there are a hundred cable channels that do that all day long. I probably spent less than a half hour talking about the Clinton sex scandal, because it wasn't local and everyone else was doing it. I wanted to stay local, to be an avenue where everyone could come to plead their case and make their point in an unfiltered way. My show got labeled as unbalanced, but what happened is that people stopped showing up to express their views because they knew they weren't just going to get softball questions.

MD: Does balance exist in the media? Is there any media outlet that is balanced and objective?

TL: No. The front page of any newspaper is opinionated one way or another. Whether it's on radio, TV or print they start from one or two people deciding whether a story qualifies to go on the air, and if so how it goes on the air. Those one or two people bring with them only their own views and opinions about what is going on. What gives someone the right to be

the editor of a newspaper or a news director in a newsroom? What gives them the right to determine the top story on the six o'clock news? What did they do to deserve that? What do they know that we don't know? They are defining what is news, how much attention it should get, and when and where. Not only what is news but what you should think about it as well, just in the way that they present it to you. From being in the industry that question always amazed me. Who are these people and what gives them the power to do that? To have that thought process going on in my head, and then to meet some of these people that make those decisions blows me away. Ron Hall? Ron Hall is 80 years old and doesn't have a clue as to what is important in today's news but he is making those decisions. Larry Parnass from the Gazette? Jim Foudy? Stan Moulton? These guys are idiots.

MD: So this concept of objectivity and fairness is a red herring?

TL: It doesn't exist.

MD: Give me a rundown of Valley media. Let's start with the Daily Hampshire Gazette.

TL: It has to be one of the worst newspapers I have ever read. Talk about slanted. You don't know if City Hall is running the city or if the Gazette is running the city for City Hall or how that connection is done. People sit there and think that the newspaper is news. The problem I have not only with the Gazette but with other publications is this: they do their opinion, on the editorial page, where they decide what is right and wrong for the community, and then they criticize me for doing the same damn thing. The difference is that I put my name on my editorials. I stopped doing interviews with the Gazette because of the way they report, because I am labeled a conservative and therefore an enemy of theirs. They are still reporting and quoting me on interviews I have never given to them. It's almost as if they grab the facts that seem like they would fit in a story the way they want them to fit.

MD: What about the Union News?

TL: Locally there is very little juice. It's all being run down out of Springfield. Dave Reid, the Northampton bureau chief who I consider a friend of mine, didn't even know that the editorial about me was going in the paper. One of the top news stories in Northampton, my candidacy, is being editorialized by the Springfield editors who I never talked to in my life. Wayne Pfaneuf is the one who wrote

that, and he never talked to Dave about it. I have never talked to Wayne about my candidacy once in my life. He doesn't have a clue who I am or what I believe, but he has decided for the Union News that I should go home and not run for office.

MD: The Advocate?

TL: To be honest with you —and my friends over there will be upset—I don't read it. I read Tom Vannah's articles every once in a while and that's about it. I don't think they cover things I am interested in. When I am looking for a place to go out or something to do, sure, but if I am looking for news or coverage of a story in the Valley I don't pick up the Advocate.

MD: They seem to take a real kid gloves approach to Northampton. City Hall here seems to be a sacred cow to them.

TL: I agree with that, I think they are too soft in the Valley. They should have been all over the Smith Vocational story and the perjury. They should have gone nuts with it, but they didn't cover it. I am the one who covered that story. Why am I covering stories? My show never should have been a source for news. My show should have been a place to discuss things, so that we could all talk about the possibility that Mary Ford lied under oath and then determine if it was an issue.

MD: What is the status of radio now in Northampton?

TL: There is no radio. You can listen to some syndicated programs which are decent shows. I enjoy Judy Jarvis as far as talk shows go. Mike Gallagher I can't stand. But there is nothing as an avenue for local talk radio.

MD: So people aren't getting what they need to know in the Valley from the media here?

TL: The Gazette isn't going to take on Stan Rosenberg or Bill Nagle and say why aren't you doing your job. There is this belief that if you take someone to task on one issue that you are no longer a friend of theirs. I disagree with Stan Rosenberg on a lot of things he's done and support him on a lot of the things he has done. I consider him a friend and a good politician. I disagree with him a lot, it doesn't mean that I hate the man or that he is the Antichrist.

MD: Where did that cowardice come from?

TL: Dave Reid was no longer allowed to do my show. I had him on as a guest

a couple times and the Springfield people found out about it and said you can't go on that show. How ridiculous is that? We are not competitors. This idea that everyone is a competitor and is therefore your enemy is just ridiculous to me.

MD: Who do you like in the Valley?

TL: I like Tom Vannah's articles. I think the Valley gets overlooked and that will probably get worse especially if the Advocate moves to Springfield. I assume that they will. If they go to Springfield it is a loss even for the little they do up here.

MD: What do you think of the average newspaper man and the average radio jock?

TL: The average newspaper man is a hack. They are afraid to go and ask a mayor if and why she lied.

What's the mayor going to do?

MD: They must be feeling that chilling effect.

TL: I can understand why a lot of people don't do what I didn't do by not discussing what was going on at WHMP. It was wrong because people depended on me to tell them about issues that affected them. To say that daily reporters are afraid to really go and do some journalism and ask the right questions because their editors and bosses will either squash their stories and reprimand them, well, God help us all if that is happening.

MD: Is it important for local media to get out front and be honest about what their motives and opinions are?

TL: The Gazette should run a disclaimer; "The views and opinions expressed in this paper are those of the editors and owners of the Daily

Hampshire Gazette and may not reflect those of our advertisers or our readers." That's fine, go ahead, and then slam whoever you want to slam and say whatever you want to say. They have a false facade of being a factual publication when they are nothing more than an opinionated tabloid.

MD: So your relationship with WHMP is over?

TL: Until the corporate management structure changes. I love the station and the local people that work there. I would go back there in a heartbeat if the corporate management were gone and there were some guarantees about procedures in the future.

You Got To Move

Our field correspondent Gerbil Vanderbilt reports that the Valley Advocate will soon be leaving its bucolic but cramped digs in Hatfield for another location. Folks there are shitting bricks; the takeover by corporate globule Times Mirror means that not only must they fear for their jobs — a certain amount of downsizing is inevitable — they must also be ignobly hustled out of the little Shangri-la where they have grown quite fat and contented.

The new corporate parents, gently stroked in editorials by Advocate managing editor Tom Vannah and editor-in-chief Dan "Overhead" Caccavaro, are not likely to show reciprocal respect for their underlings. They will want to stick the bloated weekly into a lower-rent district, possibly in Northampton but more likely in Easthampton or Springfield.

Do I approve? As Captain Beefheart once said, "sure 'nuff 'n yes I do." The isolated Hatfield property, with shade trees and a stream, is symbolic of the Advocate's detachment from the real life of the Valley. Occasionally the paper runs decent stuff between "best of" lists, but mostly the little cash cow is docile and predictable. The Advocate is a commodity, a cheap knockoff of an "alternative" paper, as a twinkie is to a cannoli. No doubt it will become even more wishy washy — oops, I mean "fair and responsible" — while the corporate headmen sharpen their knives and survey the fresh meat.

What irritates me most about the Advocate is that they pound endlessly on stooges like Mike Albano and "Disney" Dan, but portray Northampton's political establishment — fascinating and savage, dripping with puritan vengeance — as a citadel of civility and benevolent competence. They also refuse to cover the dynamic racial shifts and economic trends that are radically transforming the Valley. Believe me, if Murphy were able to pay me more, I would cover the stuff. And zowie, are there great stories crying out to be covered!

A stint in Springfield could do the Advocate some good. Or maybe they should lease a corner of Eric Suher's ES Sports complex in Holyoke. Either way, their perspective on things can only improve. Holyoke is a city that urban policy expert David Rusk, in a speech to the Council of State Governments, identified as being "past the point of no return," in the same category as Paterson, New Jersey and East St. Louis, Illinois. Springfield is not far behind. With the Valley's urban cores dead and dying, can Northampton really be the paradise they claim?

There could be one upside to the Advocate's exile. If Times Mirror dumps it in Springfield, displaced staffers can check out the veal parmesan grinders at Milano's, off of Page Boulevard. The yummy concoctions have just been awarded VMag's "best veal parm in the Valley" citation. Best of all, last time I looked, they were only \$4.75, with pasta and salad.

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SHOOT THE MESSENGER

ROBERT TOBEY

GOING DOWN?

JFK Jr's *George* was a well-intentioned mess, both in editorial stance (by having too many it didn't have one) and visual presentation (chopped-up, with lots of floating bits). The magazine's cheery and opportunistic notion that politics could be embraced in all its multi-partisan passions was ridiculous; a rosy and unreal gambit that was intended primarily to deliver a broader readership which, predictably, it didn't (partisans, by definition, are not much interested in other people's opinions). The design seemed intended to convey a *Vanity Fair* sort of chattiness, like a room full of lively and vocal competing interests, but in practice all parts were de-emphasized to the point of general inconsequence. Modern design in publishing presumes an epidemic of attention deficit disorder, but I think the presumption itself causes ADD, and conditions the audience, finally, to pay no attention at all.

Somebody said that Washington is Hollywood for ugly people, which is why *George*, cheesily, kept a steady stream of real Hollywood-style starlets and super-models hooking on the cover. But if your magazine is about politics, you've still got to deal with the ugly people, and the fact is politicians are not, or at least very rarely are, true celebrities. It seems to me what the great majority of politicians achieve is not celebrity but merely an unpleasant notoriety. Of course even ugly, unglamorous people can be interesting for the strength of their convictions (you could even argue, perversely, that ugly people are more likely to have interesting convictions, because what else have they got?). But a convincing set of convictions, alas, is about the last thing I would accuse most politicians of having. So, sooner or later, I'm afraid, regardless of His death, *George* was destined for a dead end.

What I did like, in a sentimen-

tal sort of way, was the picture given by *George* staffers of John F. Kennedy Jr being bitten by the newspaper bug, becoming addicted to the camaraderie and adrenalized purpose that are chief seductions in the journalism biz. It is, after all, a good occupation for people of passionate yet vague identity. (And with those towering forebears, and his killer male-model looks, it would be a miracle if he didn't have identity problems.) There's a vicariousness to the publishing life that's a little suspect: you get to project upon the world, a player manqué, while taking on the unearned shine of powerful people and big events. But the passion to be in the mix of things, to be at the center of the action, to see it truly, and perhaps even make a difference in how it's seen — and thereby, just maybe, alter the future a little — can be very real for people in journalism. The shared sense of mission that characterizes any well-intentioned journalistic enterprise can be a heady and beautiful and strangely humbling experience. When it clicks in the editorial office —even if it doesn't succeed on the newsstand— it's a live ensemble performance of a script drawn from the First Amendment.

TRIPTYCH
In 1927 Philo Farnsworth transmitted the first television image — of a dollar sign.

Yesterday as my daughter settled in to watch *Barney* on Public TV, she growled right along with the Tony The Tiger PBS promo: "And remember: thinking and creating aren't just good, they're GRRREAT!"

I spotted an empty Absolut Vodka bottle in the trash the other day, and for a moment I thought it was something valuable.

THE TRIUMPH OF KITSCH

Flipping through *Interview* magazine — this is what you do with the profoundly superficial *Interview*, flip — I came

across a big picture of a youngish, tousle-haired man in the midst of a gaggle of strangely-dressed and matronly ladies, and I said to myself with a chuckle: *Jesus Christ that guy looks a lot like Bob Cilman*. And then I looked a little longer, and a little closer, and said out loud: *Jesus Christ it is Bob Cilman!* (With resplendent members of The Young At Heart Chorus). That's great, Bob. You and the troupe surely warrant the attention. In fact, I understand there's a warrant out already. (And jeez you coulda dressed-up a little for the picture and not had to borrow that funny-looking suit from some guy Hugo Boss or whatever his name was.)

THIS IS REALLY EXCITING

MTV is not only showing lots of bad videos, they're also producing and showing documentaries about how some of the more profitable bad videos get made! The one I saw was about bare-midriff just-shy-of-kiddie-porn teen sensation Britney Spears and the making of her new video (which premiered for the very first time right after the documentary was over!) for her song, "You Drive Me Crazy." I don't know about you, but I think MTV is looking awfully tired these days. A sure sign of the souring of their "mission" is how they now make a mockery of their own audience and the stars they suck up to: the kids of *Real World* are exposed as shallow, vain, and foolish; the people who call in for advice on *Loveline* or whatever are regularly scolded like nasty, stupid children; and poor career-driven, over-achieving Britney's candid soundbite was an oft-repeated "I'm just a little stressed." As for the video itself, there seems to be no limit to the speed by which narrative and continuity can be obliterated. Watching these things is like being in a brightly lit closet full of exploding lava lamps, with someone yelling clichés in your ears: a fabulous elaboration of absolutely nothing. All that energy! All that money! All that film school education! It makes me want to cry.

good reads

The Woman Who Cut Off Her Leg At The Maidstone Club and other stories
by Julia Slavin
Henry Holt and Company
\$22.00



Julia Slavin has just put out the most inventive, clever, and imaginative collection of short stories of recent years. Her stories begin in the mundane, but soon take the reader to a plane never thought of. She uses the un-real and the super-real to spread lessons and questions about our ordinary daily lives. The reader becomes engulfed in Slavin's fantastic normalcy and loses themselves in her worlds that are just left of our own. A woman's love affair with a tree, the strange bond between man and a giant lobster named Gina, the struggles of a relationship as a man's wife grows teeth all over her body; these are just a few of the spectacular ideas this author uses to make a solid and real commentary on real life (well to be honest, mostly upper-middle class life).

Slavin's stories have been pegged as surrealist and this is unfortunate. Americans tend to peg anything that is fantastic and stretches the boundaries of the real world in this category, but we don't understand what the surrealist movement was about. She is not interpreting the unconscious or explaining the world we live in through the dream-world we also live in. What Slavin is doing is using a wonderful imagination, wit, and insight into contemporary American middle-class life and reflecting it back to us (albeit in a fun-house mirror). Her stories are about love, jealousy, family, and the world around us. It is unfortunate that literary critics have tried to take the easy way out describe her work here. She is much closer to a writer like Calvino than Breton, and this is to take nothing away from what the surrealists accomplished, merely a stylistic analysis.

There are twelve great tales included in the collection and Slavin is currently working on a novel. What is

truly interesting here, beyond the stories themselves, is that she has spent the last ten years working in the most stultified of mediums. She has worked in, dare I say it, television. She was an ABC-TV producer in New York, and worked on the TV news magazine, *Prime Time Live*. Normally I would be in total awe that someone from television could have produced these slightly bizarre stories, but since she was working with Sam Donaldson, I think this can explain her warped perspectives easily. He is clearly surreal. After leaving New York she settled in Washington, DC with her husband and two young children. I eagerly await her novel and wonder what the literary world lost all those years Julia Slavin was working in the drivel that is TV.

- Duke Aaron
Il Duce

City of Ice
by John Farrow
Random House
\$25.95

Do you like highly inventive mysteries that really keep you guessing? If the answer is yes, then don't buy **City of Ice**. However, if you're looking for a good book to while away a lazy afternoon and enjoy crime-drama, try it out. Farrow creates a wonderful character in Montreal Police Detective, Emile Cinq-Mars. Hard-bitten, secretive, resourceful, and decidedly French-Canadian, Cinq-Mars likes to do things his own way. The story revolves around a plot that is a tad silly, but if the reader can just escape into it for a while, then it works. The Hell's Angels, New York Mafia, and Russian gangs are joining together to create a worldwide monopoly of a crime syndicate. Yeah, I know, but bear with it for a moment. Say the author throws in the CIA, Canadian Mounties, and some corrupt cops at no extra charge: is it a deal? How about this veg-o-matic slicer/dicer? Just kidding. There's a Montreal turf war going on and car bombs are going off all over the place. Innocents are being killed and people want it to stop. Here comes the celebrated Cinq-Mars. Secrets are shattered, deals are cut, people are used, and our hero/anti-hero has to wrap it up for public consumption. Things become messy and therefore, believable.

Random House says that author John Farrow is a pseudonym for "a highly respected Canadian writer of literary fiction." This is probably

more mysterious than the novel, but that's OK. There is a lot of action, drama, and suspense to more than make up for the by-the-numbers plot line and development. The characters are believable (except for the cape-wearing Russian crime-boss known as the Czar) and the interpersonal developments are executed with a sense of precision. At every step, moral decisions have to be made and they are not easy. An over-riding sense of justice brings the plot into ourselves and Farrow makes the reader really think about the difference between the letter of the law and the realities of day to day police work. He deals squarely with careerism and duplicity within the ranks of law enforcement and tackles the difficulties created when working with some criminals to get the bigger fish. Just where is the line between getting good busts for a cop and becoming co-opted by criminal endeavors? Farrow doesn't pretend to answer the question, but raises it thoughtfully and intelligently. A wonderful theory is presented that cops and criminals are psychologically similar; it just so happens that the crooks are a little less weak minded. I never thought about it so clearly, but it certainly rings true to me.

Montreal is brought to life in this novel. Farrow presents an amazingly well done portrait of this city of duality. French vs. English, wealthy vs. poor, and religion vs. contemporary society all clash within these pages. The author does a truly commendable job not providing easy answers to complex issues and in the end leaves us with a sense of completeness mixed with the knowledge of a never ending struggle. The copyright reads "John Farrow Mysteries" and so I have the feeling we will see Emile Cinq-Mars again. He is a more rugged Poirot and thus allows for more action within his understated cleverness. The Sherlock Holmes worship could have been toned down a bit, but I guess you can't fault the author for looking towards that character as a model. I mean, is there a better created detective in literature? This will become a wonderful series if that truly is Farrow's plan and I think the suspense and mystery will become increasingly better over time. This first attempt, while good, fell squarely in the genre of crime fiction without the sparkling surprises that are doled out, piecemeal, in the best of mystery novels and stories. Miss Marple has little to worry about, but Jessica Fletcher might want to stay in Maine.

So, again we're back to the real mystery: who is John Farrow? Is he embarrassed to link his name to so low a literary genre as mysteries? If so, then shame on him. Is he really a successful author of literary fiction as his publisher assures us? Is this merely a cheap gimmick and easy publicity stunt? I don't know, but if you figure any of this out then let me in on it. Try www.atrandom.com for starters, but if you see any Mafioso bikers speaking Russian, maybe you should give up the search.

- Duke Aaron
Il Duce

Margaret

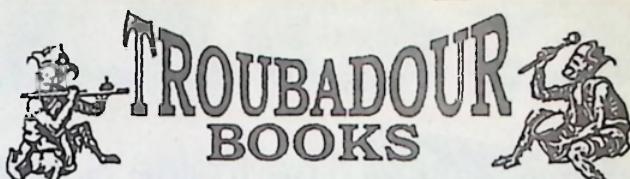
by Jessica Kavanau

Self-distributed cassette

\$3.00

Northampton's own, Jessica Kavanau, has a new work of creative fiction available. As in her previous work, Margaret deals with the twists and turns of love/relationships more often politely forgotten than mentioned. This story is about triangles. There is the relationship between Margaret and her lover Dick, between Dick and his uncle Joe, between Joe and Margaret, between Margaret and her therapist, and (catch a breath) Dick and Margaret's therapist. Everyone is trying to include and exclude everyone else. Power and sexuality become horribly intertwined in many fashions throughout this tale and regardless of where Margaret turns she finds it impossible to disentangle from one place without entangling herself elsewhere. Dick wants her on his terms. She wants love. Her therapist wants her to follow his advice. She just wants some help. Uncle Joe just wants her. Looking for some solace, she agrees, and then, is quickly forgotten. In the end, male egos come together and work out their differences with no thought of Margaret, her well-being, or anything other than simply removing her and the embarrassing nuisance she has become for them. The aptly named Dick is malicious and revengeful, and uses his abilities in the male-dominated realm of law to totally disenfranchise Margaret from the world. Kavanau delves deep into the realms of human emotion, sexuality, respect and the role of the sexes in contemporary society. The main body of the story attacks the characters and relationships straightforwardly, bringing to mind the work of Fielding Dawson and some of the other down-to-earth beat writers, but Kavanau gives the ending a delicious, Kafka-esque twist that poignantly attacks some of our society's most entrenched barbarisms. I'm pleased to have the opportunity to see into the literary world she creates and would remind our readers that she sells her work to us in a somewhat daring form. Bypassing mainstream distribution methods, she sells her wares in a mediated form of the story-teller. You can buy cassettes of her stories directly for three dollars as she sells them, street-vendor style, in downtown Northampton. They are also available at Pleasant Street Video for four dollars. This tape was recorded by Ned Salavka and narrated by local NoHo business owner, Judith Fine. Please also ask about The Bagman (reviewed in VMag 19, May 1999). Margaret will be distributed through WGBY in the near future along with its sequel, currently in the works. A sequel to The Bagman is also to be watched for in the near future.

- Duke Aaron
II Duce



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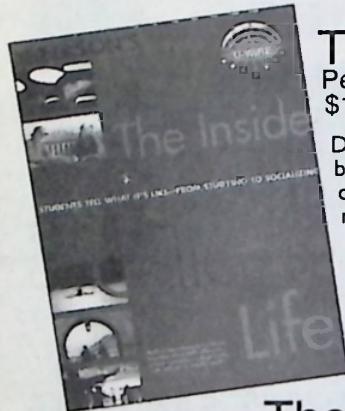
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The Inside Scoop on College Life

Peterson's
\$16.95

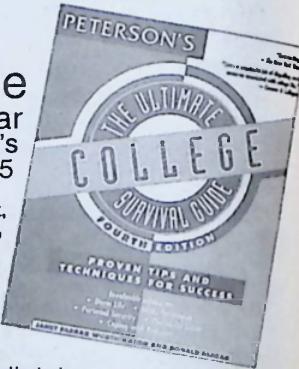
Do you want to know what college life is really about, not just the information available in the glitz brochure sent out by the admissions office? This book is a virtual visit to campus life through articles written by students at their respective college newspapers. Although every possible campus is not represented, this guide will give you an idea of what it is like to attend a two-year college, a small liberal arts school, a large state university, a religious institution, and a highly competitive university. **The Inside Scoop** can give you the information you need—from academic life to social life—so that you can narrow your search to a reasonable few schools that might be the perfect fit for your college years.

-Kyle Cohen

The Ultimate College Survival Guide

by Janet Farrar Worthington & Ronald Farrar

Peterson's
\$14.95



"Oh no! What am I going to do? I have to move out of my house, live with a stranger, and on top of that, I have to do schoolwork!" If that thought ever crossed your mind, or, I suppose, if you're a parent who worries that your child won't be able to handle college, **The Ultimate College Survival Guide** is for you. Informative and with an easy to understand layout, it is probably meant to be browsed. However, I found myself reading sections straight through, as it treats the reader like an intelligent person. The tips range from serious (don't bring anything you can't bear having stolen), to sneaky (toothpaste is really good for filling in small holes). I found that the best feature of the book was the fact that most of it dealt with the life changes you'll go through surviving the first year (most of one's freshman year really is just settling in and adjusting). The book also helps out with what to pack and what to leave home, and what to do if your roommate really sucks. Also, the attitude of the book towards concepts like piercings and tattoos is one of "Try it, see if you like it, but don't do anything that you might regret later," rather than being preachy. Best of all, and very important in a reference book, **The Ultimate College Survival Guide** includes both a table of contents with chapter headings (and subheadings), and a comprehensive index at the end to help you locate just about anything.

-Steve Guillerm

College Money Handbook 2000

(17th edition)
Peterson's
\$26.95



I wish I had known about this guide last year when I began the college search with my first-born child. Although I had some excellent material to help me, the **College Money Handbook** contains all the answers and affirms my son's choice of colleges. With this guide you can determine almost exactly how much you will need for college, as every college and university's financial aid offerings are listed here. You'll learn how many freshman apply for aid, how many are determined to have need, and of those how many and what percentage the school actually helps. In my son's case, 100% of those needing aid received 100% of what they needed. That kind of information will help you to weed out the colleges that won't offer the package you need (it'll also save you an application fee or two). I'm suggesting you spend \$26.95 on a book, but it may save you thousands of dollars in your quest for an education. This book comes with Access Advisor student financial planning software (disc) to make it easy to plan and manage your student loan debt.

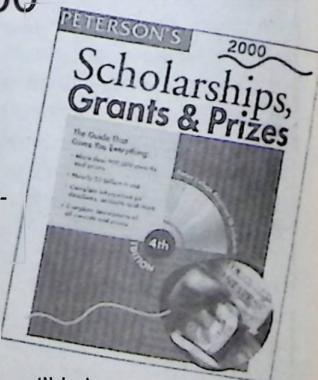
-Kyle Cohen

Scholarships, Grants & Prizes 2000

(4th edition)
Peterson's
\$26.95

"Wait just a minute! I'm already in college and you want me to shell out yet another \$26.95 for scholarship information?" That's right! And it is money well spent as there are many awards available even after you have chosen a school and are well into your education. Some of the information in this guide will help you with graduate school, too. There's even a bonus CD containing Peterson's best tools to supplement their guide, and Netscape Navigator software. Whether you are still in high school and at the mercy of an overworked guidance department or already in college and trying to navigate the uncertain waters of financial aid, this guide can help you find more than 900,000 awards and prizes and \$3 billion in aid.

-Kyle Cohen



guides

Letting Go: A Parents' Guide to Understanding the College Years

by Karen Levin Coburn & Madge Lawrence Treeger

Harper Perennial \$13.00



Although this is not a new book (the third revision came out in 1997), it's an important addition to any parent's bookshelf. I wish I had known about it a year ago as we began to look at colleges for my son. Freshman year began this month and *Letting Go* helped me to understand the transition that both he and I had made to get him there. *Letting Go* reassures you that your once adoring child is not a monster, just a young adult seeking independence. The authors offer comments from other parents and students who have made the jump from college-bound to dorm life. *Letting Go* is at once psychology and common sense. Buy it as you start the college search and keep it on hand through college graduation. Written as a parents' guide, this book is also a great tool for stu-

dents as it will give them insight (from student interviewees) on what really goes on behind the ivied walls and what to expect from their parents as they make the transition from home to university.

-Kyle Cohen



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42 books in brief



Batman: Animated

By Paul Dini and Chip Kidd
HarperCollins
\$25

There is only one word to describe this book: *amazing*. Even the most cartoon-hating person on earth would be in awe of some of the art shown in *Batman: Animated*. It's just that beautiful.

Batman: Animated is a view-book of all things relating to *Batman: The Animated Series*. From the sketches, to the backgrounds, to the finished copies, the art is superb. The book also tells the reader who influenced the show, and how the style was born. The show is described as a timeless mixture of art deco and film noir, and many examples show through. Such examples include the use of zeppelins, while at the same time, the computers used seem so

futuristic. Also, I did not fully appreciate the beauty of the backgrounds of Gotham City until I saw them in still pictures.

Actually, there is another word that should be used to describe the book: *complete*. This book contains almost anything one would want to see, including a complete episode guide, as well as images of each and every one of the title cards that are shown at the beginning of an episode. It also covers the two *Batman* animated movies, *Mask of the Phantasm* and *Deep Freeze*, and the transition from Fox to the WB! network.

Perhaps the best thing about the book, though, is it tells why a lot of things ended up the way they did. There were many obstacles the show's creators had to go through, including censoring violence, and language. It also shows how the characters work, how they were animated, as well as how some of this changed when the network transition occurred. It also gives attention to nearly every character, no matter how small a part they play in the show. Obviously, the Joker has more coverage, but it's nice to see the little guys, like detectives Bullock and Montoya.

Over all, if you like *Batman: The Animated Series*, this book is definitely for you. Even if you like the *Batman* comics, it is still a great book. If you like cartoons, well, then you probably have seen *Batman: TAS* at least a few times. If you appreciate great book design, check it out; Chip Kidd (*Batman Collected*) works his usual layout magic. Go into a bookstore and take a look. Maybe you won't like it, but I'm guessing you will, and perhaps it may even prompt you to watch the show. Any way you slice it, the book is a true thing of beauty, and a must read, at least once.

- S. Guillerm

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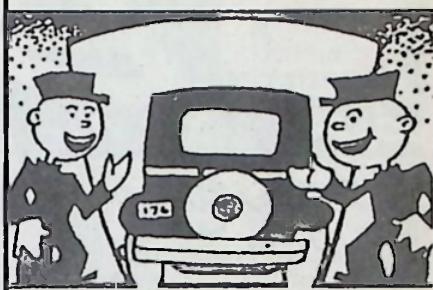
Peterson's \$26.95

According to Publishers Weekly, this is the #1 Bestselling college guide. It is easy to use and contains nearly 1000 exclusive in-depth descriptions as well as research on every US-accredited four-year college. By using the information in 4 Year Colleges 2000 you will be able to pare your selection down to the top ten schools that are right for you before taking an even closer look and cutting that list into a manageable five or six that you really want to consider. From surviving the SATs to understanding financial aid to applying. Peterson's gives you what you need to make that all-important choice of your college. There are indexes to select degree of difficulty, cost range, majors and geography, as well as changes

made in 1998-99. When you are planning to spend thousands of dollars on a college education, it is smart money to use this most up-to-date and comprehensive guide, even if it is 3257 pages long (!).

- Kyle Cohen

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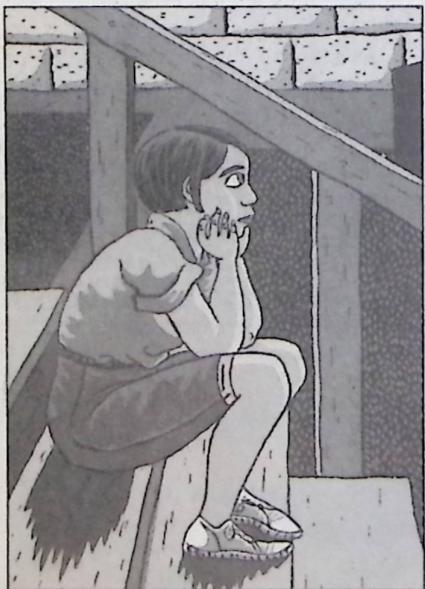
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While there's still Wonder Woman, there are quite a few comic books that are far apart from the super-hero woman of supernormal powers and or of intense fashion sense. Comic book stories where women lead the way, that explore what it's like to be a girl, where the focus is on tightly written, excitingly drawn comics where women are the feature players, are the spotlight this month.

WOLFF & BYRD: COUNSELLORS OF THE MACABRE

Alanna Wolff, senior partner, nobody's fool, bright in court and sassy on the street, takes up representation for owners of a "were-house" sued for damages during a full moon, and defends the likes of the man who broke the law of gravity. W&B is for readers who revel in wordplay, and like excellent comics art to look at, too. "Beware the creatures of the night: they have lawyers!" By Baton Lash, Exhibit A Press, 4657 Cajun Way, San Diego, CA 92115 / www.edge.global.com/exhibit/.

AKIKO

Akiko, a little girl of good courage and great resourcefulness—and with interplanetary experience and friends—has rescued a prince and crash-landed on farmland in modern Japan. For 32 issues, her adventures have been endlessly entertaining as Akiko comes to take command of her interdimensional band, and finds herself able, if uncertain, yet capable even when overwhelmed. From Mark Crilley, POB 71564, Madison Heights, MI 48071/poogmail@erthlink.net.

NOWHERE

Debbie Dreschler's Nowhere lays out what it's like to be 8th-grader Lily, the new girl in school in suburban nowhere—new friends, new boys, same old battles with her younger sister. Lily likes Steve, but she's letting the unlikable Dunham catch her after school; and sister Pearl—is she really flirting with another girl? From Drawn and Quarterly Press, POB 48056, Montreal H2V 4S8 Canada.

DREAMWALKER

Dreamwalker is the well-scripted, well-drawn story of 24-year-old Karen Brinson, who unwillingly, unwittingly, "trespasses" through other people's dreams, while trying to keep her own waking life in order. With a thin and delicate line and some of comics' most beautiful covers, writer/artist Jenni Gregory effortlessly pulls us into the believably fantastic. Karen's growing familiarity with the dreamscape, and her increased assurance in her waking life create a solid, fictional biography of an awakening psychic. From Jenni Gregory, 506 E. Elm #1, Urbana, IL 61801.

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McDonald's

Currently 6 pieces for ninety nine cents, 9 pieces for \$1.59. Who does the math for these guys, fifth graders? The only place that randomly inserts greasy dark meat into your pack. Kinda like Russian roulette: you never know what you're gonna get. One of the best outer crusts, tho' — crunchy, thin and golden. Medium oil content.

Closeness to real chicken: Greasy but close for dark meat; funky, processed and slightly rubbery feel for white.

Burger King

Five pieces for ninety-nine cents. When BK originally introduced chicken in the early 90's, they were real chicken breast filets. Today they are oblong processed duplicates: in a strange Orwellian twist the company has never acknowledged that there was ever a change. Usually microwaved, not freshly deep-fried for ya. Outer crust correspondingly limp and lifeless.

Closeness to real chicken: Pretends to be real chicken breast, but is highly processed and usually unpredictable in quality. Rubbery in a not-reassuring fashion, but occasionally not bad. 8 pieces for \$1.89, five pieces for 0.99 — seriously, do any of these guys know math?

Wendy's

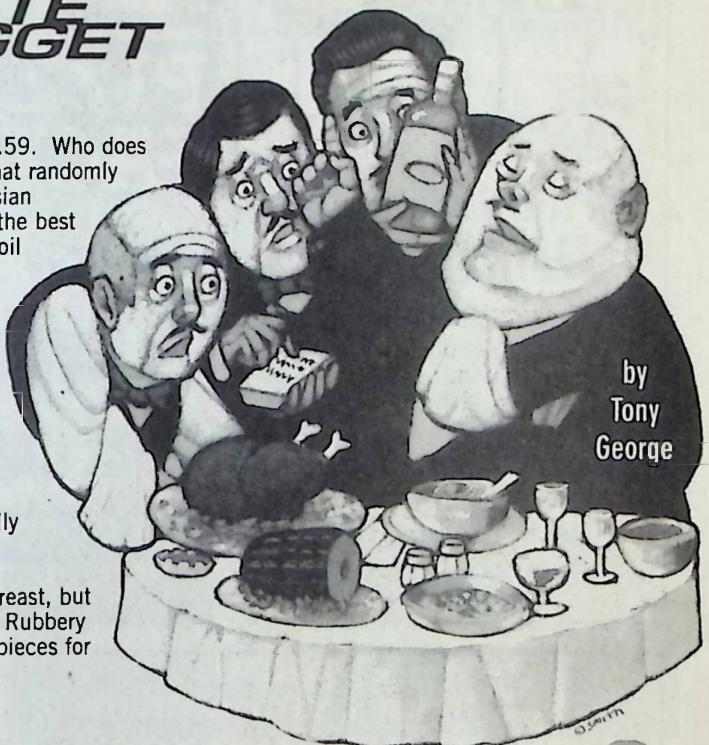
Newcomer on the block to the chicken game. The most processed of the bunch, but usually fresh out of the fry-o-lator. Crunchy crust and spicy, but strangely textured in a most un-chicken-like fashion.

Closeness to real chicken: Like hot dogs trying to be filet mignon... but usually uniform quality and not all that bad.

Kentucky Fried Chicken

Popcorn chicken (not currently available). Little bits of real chicken breast buried in a quicksand of undercooked breading. Acting as an oil sponge, the 20-80 chicken-to-bread ratio ensures a cardiac stressing stroke snack. Once in while they're cooked properly, but that's like waiting for the LA Clippers to win three in a row.

Closeness to real chicken: The only real chicken out of all those reviewed, but as authentic as looking at naked pictures of Cameron Diaz at fifty paces. For breading lovers only.



by
Tony
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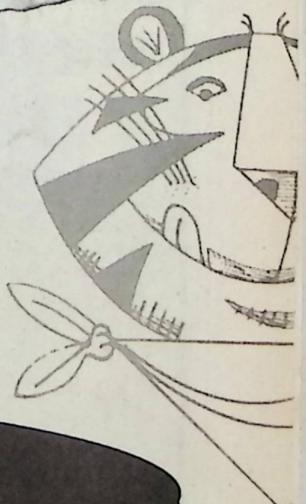


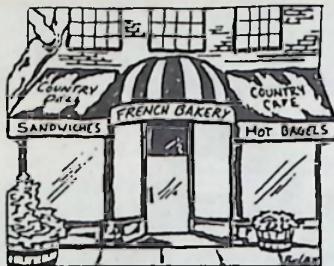
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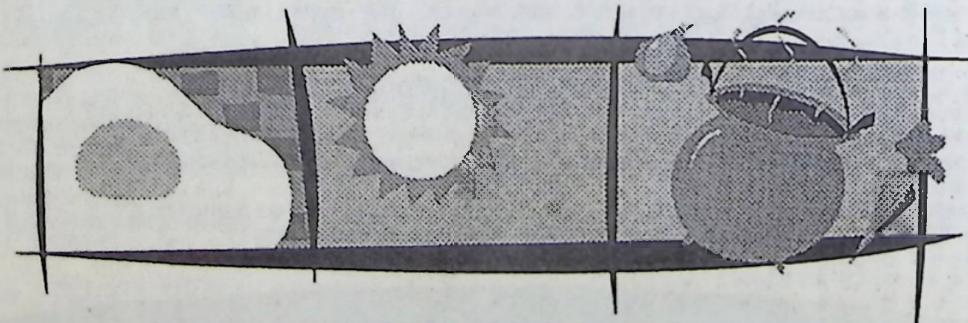


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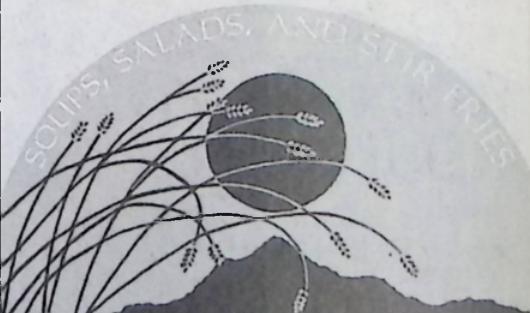
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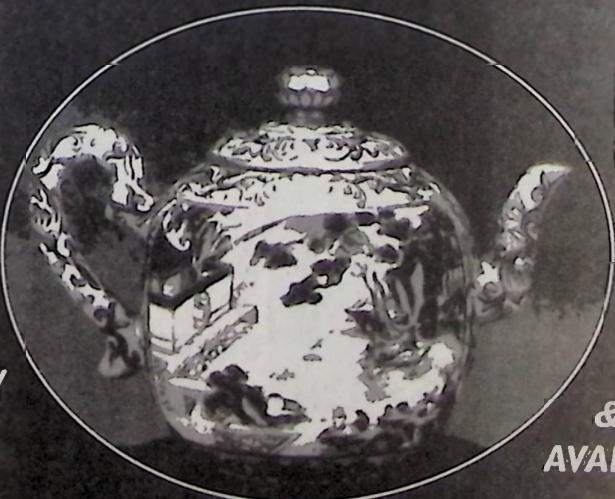
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*the end of photography as evidence of anything

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The gal's a muse

Greetings one and all -

While perusing the amherst-common.com web page I noticed the new section by VMag (one of my personal favorite magazines) and it was great to see our museum listed and recommended by Lulu. I just have to point out one error: we are a museum, not a gallery. After the interview we are listed under art galleries as "Mead Art Gallery," when in fact we are the Mead Art Museum. It's an important distinction as we do not

have art work for sale as do galleries. We do have a phenomenal American Art Collection though, in addition to some fantastic European and Non-Western Art. Currently we are closed for renovations until Spring 2001 so I suppose this point is moot, but I just wanted to take the opportunity to bring it to your attention. I enjoyed the interview and once again VMag has managed to keep my attention and entertain me. Keep up the good work!

-Donna Abelli
Mead Art Museum
Amherst College

V and Mr. Jones

V -

Thanks for taking the time to send me a copy of our record review; you're the only mag who's ever done so with no effort whatsoever on my part.

My band will also be endlessly available for any VMag profiles or interviews should you need some filler or cover features of the amusing pop culture sort!

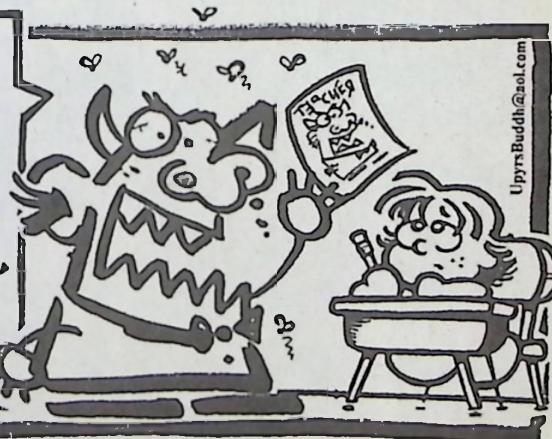
-Tao Jones/Yanni Difranco
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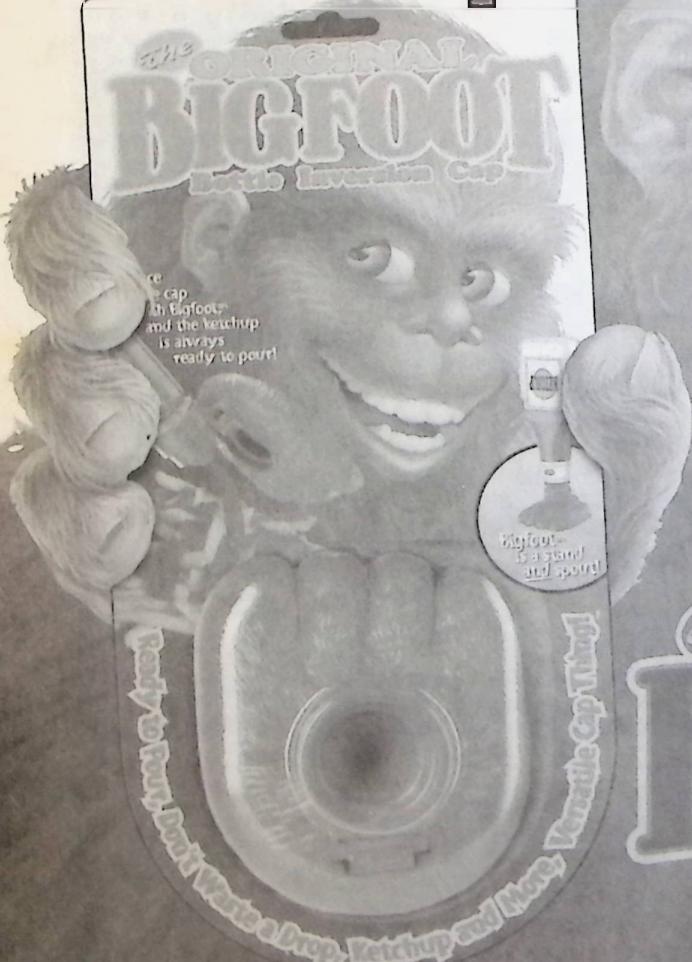
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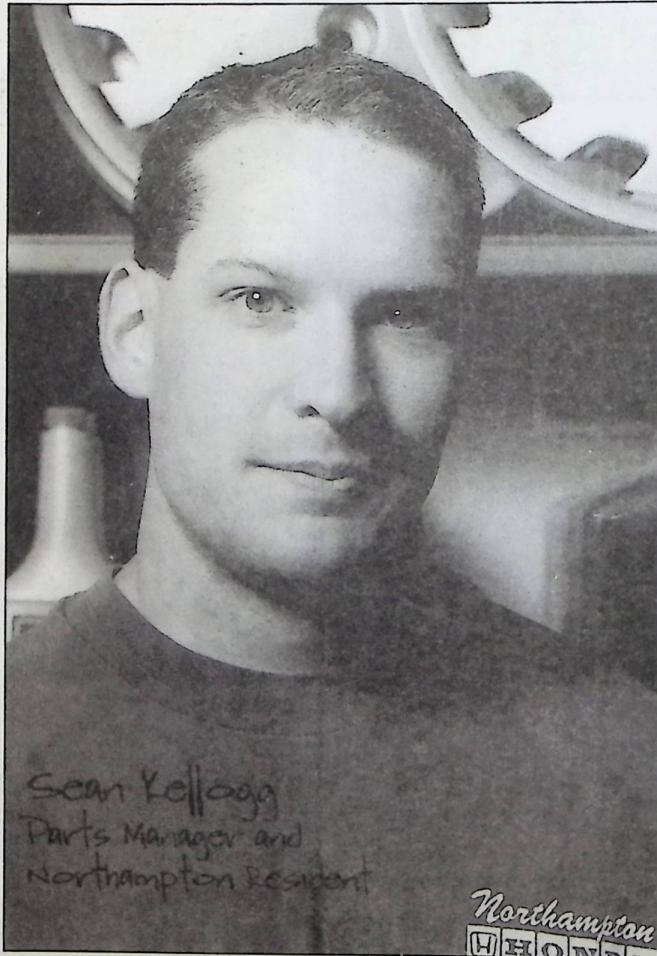
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